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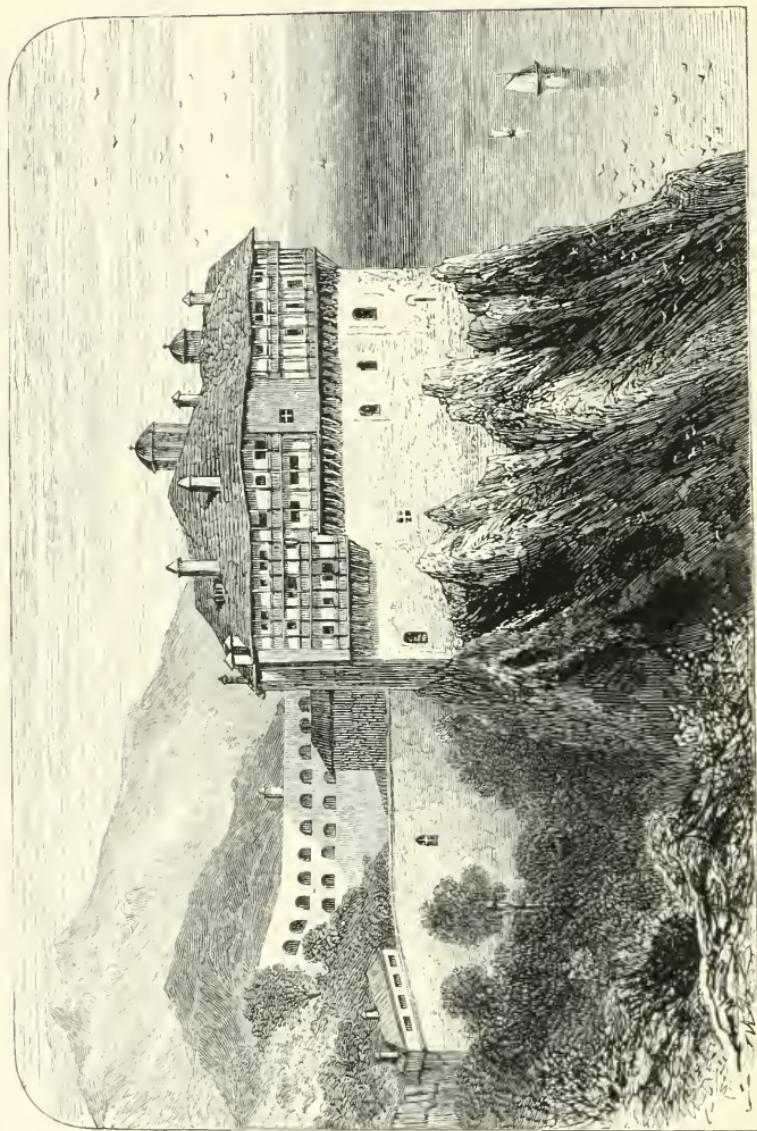


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MONASTERY OF SIMOPITRA MOUNT ATHOS



WAYNE S. VUCINICH

RESEARCHES

IN THE

HIGHLANDS OF TURKEY;

INCLUDING

VISITS TO MOUNTS IDA, ATHOS, OLYMPUS, AND PELION,
TO THE MIRDITE ALBANIANS, AND
OTHER REMOTE TRIBES.

WITH NOTES ON THE BALLADS, TALES, AND CLASSICAL
SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MODERN GREEKS.

BY THE

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IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, DUKE STREET, STAMFORD STREET,
AND CHARING CROSS.

TO
THOMAS M. CROWDER, M.A., F.R.G.S.,
MY TRAVELLING COMPANION,
THESE PAGES
ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THE journeys, of which an account is given in these volumes, were made in the summers of 1853, 1861, and 1865. The first of these in order of time has been placed last in order of narration, as it is best suited to supplement the information given in the other two.

It has been my endeavour to compress what I have to say into a moderately narrow compass, excluding for the most part matters merely personal, together with the ordinary features of Eastern life and daily incidents of travel, with which most persons are by this time acquainted. At the same time I have discussed, to the best of my ability, the various questions—historical, antiquarian, and topographical—which such a tour naturally suggests, and have illustrated them by such information as I have been able to obtain.

Turkey is at present the least known of all the countries of Europe, yet few contain so much to reward the trouble of investigation. I shall be glad if I succeed in persuading any persons, who are desirous of leaving the beaten track of tourists, that there are no insuperable

difficulties in the way of travelling in the interior, even during the summer months. But in any case I shall be amply satisfied, if I am able to impart to my readers a fraction of the pleasure which the original tours furnished to myself.

Oxford, March 10, 1869.

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THE
HIGHLANDS OF TURKEY.

CHAPTER I.

MOUNT IDA.

Departure from Constantinople — The Hellespont — The Plain of Troy — Bunarbashi — An Earthquake — A wealthy Armenian — Rivers of Greece and Asia Minor — Beyramitch — Ejjilar — Guards and Robbers — The Yuruk — Night Bivouac — Ascent of the Mountain — View from the Summit — Its Flora — Descent to Turcoman Encampment — Source of the Scamander — Return to Bunarbashi.

ON the evening of the last day of July, 1861, I left Constantinople by one of the Austrian Lloyd's steamers, in company with an old travelling companion, Mr. Crowder, bound in the first instance for the Dardanelles and the Plains of Troy. We had spent the three previous weeks partly at the Turkish capital, and partly at the delightful old Ottoman city of Brusa in Asia Minor, in making preparations for a succession of journeys into the interior, and acclimatising ourselves in some degree to the heat of a southern summer, a precaution which is almost necessary after a rapid transition from a northern climate. Constantinople can now be reached in a week from England by two different routes. Persons who are not averse to a sea voyage can take the express French steamers from Marseilles, which only stop at Messina and Athens on the

way; while those who prefer a land route have the option of going by Vienna and the Danube, from the lower course of which river a line of railway, crossing the base of the Dobrudscha, leads to Kustendji on the Black Sea; from that point there is only a short sea passage to the capital. Our travelling servant, whose name, as he accompanied us on two separate occasions, I will mention once for all at starting, was George Jacouthis, a Greek of Constantinople, and the best dragoman I have ever met with. His knowledge of Eastern languages was excellent, and his versatility in adapting himself to the emergencies of rough travelling in countries wholly unknown to him, and his freedom from any desire to take the lead or make difficulties, were qualities such as one seldom finds in men of his occupation. Besides this, he possessed unfailing good humour, and, what is rarer still, the most scrupulous honesty. To him we have good reason to ascribe much of the comfort which we enjoyed on our expeditions.

On the 1st of August we landed at the town of the Dardanelles, which lies on the Asiatic side, about half way down the strait. Our first care was to procure horses, for, as there are no roads in Turkey, but only paths and tracks, all the travelling has to be performed on horseback. By the assistance of Mr. Frederic Calvert, who at that time was the English consul, we obtained the number we required from one of the carriers of the country, who are usually willing to enter into an arrangement of this kind, as it is more profitable than their ordinary occupation of transporting merchandize. In such cases the horses are accompanied either by the owner himself, or by some person employed by him. Our baggage was of the lightest description. In addition to railway rugs to sleep on, and bags to serve as a

protection against vermin at night, we carried only a few knives, forks, and tin plates, together with a supply of coffee, sugar, and brandy, but nothing else except clothes and books ; in this way all our belongings could easily be strapped on one horse.

We started in the afternoon of the same day, and rode along the coast under the sandy hills, which, on the Asiatic as well as the European side, border the winding waters of the Hellespont. The strangeness of the appearance of this “ocean stream” is not diminished by a nearer acquaintance, forming as it does so narrow, and apparently so slight, a boundary between two great continents. Yet in reality it has been a most effectual barrier to prevent communication between them. Even now, the Slavonic tribes, which form the bulk of the population of European Turkey, are nowhere found in Asia ; nor have the Turcomans and other nomad races, which inhabit the mountains of Asia Minor, at any point penetrated into Europe. Still, it is in reality but a salt-water river ; and that it was regarded as such in ancient times is clear from the epithet “broad” which is applied to it by classical writers, and which would be unsuitable if it was conceived of as a sea.

The sun was setting when we came in sight of the open sea. The splendid forms of Imbros and Samothrace were standing out against the orange light ; but we looked in vain for Athos in the far west, though we knew that it ought to be visible when the daylight was not too bright, from having seen it on a former visit from the hills above. At last, when the twilight was far advanced, half an hour after sunset, its strange conical peak appeared above the waters, like an effect in a diorama, and continued to be distinctly seen until night came on. It is here between 90 and 100 miles off. It was dark when

we reached the Plains of Troy, across which we had to find our way as best we could, passing here and there over narrow wooden bridges which span a number of estuaries and lagoons ; the furthest of these is at the mouth of the Mendere, the principal river of the plain, the ancient Scamander. Late at night we arrived at the village of Yenishehr, the Sigeum of classical times, which stands on a hill at the north-west angle of the plain, overlooking the Ægean. Here we were lodged at the house of a Greek priest called Hadji Papas, or the "Pilgrim Father," for the name Hadji, which properly belongs to Mahometan pilgrims to Mecca, is applied by the Christians to those of their body who have visited Jerusalem.

From this place is seen the whole of the Trojan plain, which is seven miles in length from north to south, and varies from two to three in breadth, enclosed on the two sides by low ranges of hills, on which are numerous tumuli. Instead of being a green swamp, as it is during the winter and early spring, it had now a brown, or rather, when seen from a distance, a golden hue, from the crops having been lately removed ; in contrast to which the serpentine course of the Mendere formed a conspicuous object, from the line of willow trees by which its banks are shaded. On the opposite side appeared the site of Ilium Novum, the form of an ancient theatre, excavated in the slope of the hill, being distinctly visible. To the south-east, at a distance of 30 miles in a direct line, the view is bounded by the heights of Mount Ida, which are clearly seen from all the lower parts of the plain, overtopping the nearer mountains. Towards the Hellespont appeared the shining surfaces of the lagoons which we had crossed the night before, and the Turkish castle of Kumkaleh, one of the two which guard the

entrance of the strait on the European and Asiatic shore respectively. On the slope of the hill of Yenishelr, where it begins to sink down towards the village of Kumkaleh, are the two tumuli of Achilles and Patroclus; or rather, perhaps, the second is that of Antilochus, for it would seem that the ashes of Achilles and Patroclus were ultimately deposited in the same tomb.¹ Their mound is described by Homer as serving for a landmark to sailors when passing the headland.² None of these objects were new to us, for we had both of us explored the plains eight years before; on this occasion our object was to examine more minutely some points in connection with the topography of the district, and to penetrate further into the interior.

The following morning we proceeded along the foot of the western range of hills in the direction of Bunarbashi, the village which lies at the head of the plain. The peasants whom we passed were mostly employed in threshing, the operation being performed by cattle drawing a hurdle on which a man was standing. It was easy to distinguish a Greek and a Turkish threshing-floor. In the latter everything was transacted with a dignified solemnity, while, on the other hand, the lively Greeks might be seen poking fun at one another with a strong sense of enjoyment. When we had ridden about halfway we crossed the river of Bunarbashi, a full and clear, though narrow, stream, which at one period must have been a tributary of the Mendere (for the old channel is traceable which joined the two), but now flows into Besika Bay through an artificial cutting in the hills. It was partly, I believe, in consequence of the nearness of this, which, unlike so many of the rivers of the Ægean,

¹ Hom. Od. xxiv. 76 foll.

² Ibid. 82 foll.

suffers no diminution of its supply of water during the summer months, that the neighbouring harbour—now, as of old, “a treacherous station for ships”³—was chosen for the allied fleets in the summer of 1853, before the commencement of the Russian war. We followed it up to its source at Bunarbashi, where it gushes out from a number of springs in the limestone rocks in the midst of a plantation of willows, fig-trees, and agnus castus bushes. This position is one of considerable importance in connection with the topography of Troy; but we will not enter on that subject at present, as it may be more convenient to defer it until after our return from Mount Ida.

At the principal house in this village we were entertained by a Greek, who farmed a considerable amount of ground in the neighbourhood. He was an intelligent man; and his son, he told me, was at a “higher school” at the Dardanelles—one of the many excellent schools which are found in those towns of Turkey where the Greeks are congregated: there he was taught modern languages as well as ancient Greek. As I was sitting on the divan in one of the upper rooms, suddenly the house was violently shaken, and there was a sound of cracking and breaking in the lower story. “What is that!” I exclaimed. “It is an earthquake,” he replied, quite quietly, like one accustomed to it; and then added that they were not uncommon in those parts, and that the great shock which destroyed a portion of the city of Brusa in 1855 had been felt there. It is to the frequent occurrence of these throughout Greece and Asia Minor, both in ancient and modern times, that the extraordinary disappearance of the old temples is for the most part to-

³ “Statio malefida carinis,” Virg., *AEn.* ii. 23.

be referred. No doubt the hand of man has had much to do with the work of destruction, as squared blocks of stone are too tempting objects to be spared in a country where quarrying is almost unknown ; but this cause would not be sufficient in itself to explain the downfall of so many massive buildings, especially in remote parts of the country.⁴

On the occasion of our former visit, in 1853, we passed a night at this farm, at which time it was occupied by an Armenian named Meyerditch. This man's subsequent history shows that, though in the remoter parts of Turkey life and property are insecure, yet in the more favoured districts, and where European consuls are able to exercise supervision, an intelligent and active man may rise rapidly. We found him studying a French and Armenian grammar, in hopes of having some commercial transactions with the allied fleets, which were then lying together in the neighbouring harbour. This augured well for his future prospects ; and on inquiring for him eight years afterwards, we found that he had become quite a great man, had travelled in Syria, and was the proprietor of several farms about ten miles off. At one of these we stopped on our return from Ida, and witnessed the curious sight of thirty Turkish women employed as labourers to shell and pound the Valonia acorns, working and chattering through their close veils, under the supervision of a taskmaster. The owner himself was absent at Smyrna, where he had gone to be married, having no doubt made a good match among the far-famed ladies of that city. Anything relating to the Armenians is interesting, because from their wealth and ability they are likely to have a considerable share in deciding the Eastern question. So

⁴ Of Laconia in particular Strabo says, εύσειστος ἡ Λακωνική. (viii. 5, § 7.)

great is their national vitality and the hold their religion has upon them, that Haxthausen, in his ‘Transcaucasia,’ has given it as his opinion that, dispersed as they are throughout the whole of Asia, it is their mission to overpower Mahometanism by the united power of Christianity and civilisation. And as regards their capacity for business, Mr. Curzon has wittily remarked, that while it takes four Turks to cheat one Frank, two Franks to cheat one Greek, and two Greeks to cheat one Jew, it takes six Jews to cheat one Armenian. In most points their character is a great contrast to that of the Greeks. One of the American missionaries at Constantinople, who had educated a great number of young men of both nations, told me that he found the Greek mind the better of the two for the study of scientific subjects, and fonder of them ; but that the Armenian mind was far deeper and soberer, and suited to embrace moral and religious truth. Some Armenians read (and understand) Butler’s ‘Analogy.’

It has been remarked of the principal rivers of Greece and Asia Minor that there is a striking resemblance in the general features of their courses. Each of them rises in a lofty mountain range opposite the coast, and from thence descends into an inland plain bounded at the sides by transverse spurs, which run off from the main chain. At the lower extremity of this, where the mountains close in, the river passes by a narrow gorge into another plain, through which it flows into the sea. This is exactly the case with the Mendere. Rising in Mount Ida, which runs from west to east, facing the Hellespont, it flows successively through the plain of Beyramitch and the Trojan plain, which are separated from one another by a confined valley, several miles in length, at the northern termination of which stands the hill of Bunarbashi. It

was through this valley that the first part of our route lay on the way to Mount Ida. In order to reach it, we had to cross the low ridge which connects the hill of Bunarbashi with the chain to the west; on descending from which we passed over a small tract of fertile ground, which those who have fixed the site of Troy on the neighbouring height have regarded as the Ileian plain.⁵ The principal vegetation here, as in all the more level parts of the surrounding district, is the Valonia oak (the ancient *βάλανος*), the husk of the acorn of which is used in tanning, and is exported from hence in considerable quantities. The sides of the river are fringed with plane-trees, and the sandy hills, which close in the valley, are covered with pines. Owing to the narrowness of its bed, the Mendere in the winter time, when the floods come down from Mount Ida, often rises to a great height above its banks. The valley continues to wind with pretty scenery for some ten miles, until the upper plain is reached; at the western end of which, on a tributary of the Mendere, is the town of Enaeh, the ancient Neandria. We entered it about nightfall, passing a fine cypress-grove and a burial-ground on the way, and took up our quarters at the house of a hospitable Armenian, to whom we had an introduction.

The next morning we rode, in four hours, along the plain to Beyramitch, the chief town of the district and the residence of Achmet Bey, the governor. The ground was in parts left untilled, but where it was cultivated the crops were fine, and the farming seemed better than in most parts of Turkey. On the way we met strings of camels, bringing down the produce of the interior to the sea: over our heads large flights of storks were wheeling

⁵ Il. xxi. 558.

about in the air. The heat at this time was very great at midday, but was modified by a refreshing breeze from the north-east—the same, in all probability, which blows down the Bosphorus with little intermission during the summer months, and gives employment to the number of tug-steamers which ply between the sea of Marmora and the Black Sea. The governor, at whose house we made our midday halt, was a portly person dressed in European costume, which looked out of place in the midst of his gaily attired guards. He had a depressed look, and I have since heard that, like so many of the Turkish upper class, he is a great drunkard; but to an Englishman he may fairly assume a romantic aspect, as he is great-grandson of Byron's Giaffir in the 'Bride of Abydos,' who was governor of the Dardanelles. When, however, he was once asked by an English acquaintance whether he had had a great-aunt called Zuleika, he reflected a little, then shook his head vacantly, and replied, "Allah knows!"

The town of Beyramitch, the population of which is principally Turkish, is a place of some size, prettily situated on a hill-side at the edge of the plain, and surmounted by a conspicuous grove of superb pine-trees, which here, as well as in other places in the neighbourhood, serve instead of cypresses to mark the cemeteries, the graves being distinguished by ovals of stones. From this place to Evjilar, which was to be our starting-point for the ascent of Ida, the usual route lies through the plain; but, as it was circuitous, in consequence of the projecting spurs which are here thrown out by the mountain, we preferred to follow a less frequented track over the hills. After a light repast on stewed cucumbers and cold maccaroni pancakes, which made us regret the more liberal hospitality of our humbler entertainers, we started

again on our way in the midst of magnificent scenery, the whole range of Ida being displayed on our right, stretching from east to west in a long line of wooded heights of beautiful form, broken only here and there by transverse buttresses. When we had proceeded some distance we missed our path, and, in the course of our wanderings among the hills, came upon an encampment of Turcomans with their flocks, who were living in huts composed of branches and leaves. Ultimately, however, we arrived before sunset at our destination, Evjilar, a small Turkish village, composed of rude cottages, on the banks of the Mendere.

The river had changed considerably in appearance since we last saw it near Enaelh. Instead of being a broad and tranquil piece of water, it had now all the characteristics of a Devonshire trout-stream, including among them the excellent small trout which abound in it; indeed, when we looked along its glancing waters, rippling among the rocks, we might easily have fancied ourselves in that county of England, had it not been for the Oriental plane-trees by which it is shaded. Just below the village is a rustic wooden bridge, the view from which is exquisitely romantic. Looking up the confined valley in which the crystal river flows, you see the picturesque wooded spurs which descend on either side of it from the main chain, beyond which rises the great mountain itself, clothed with dark forests until within a thousand feet of the summit, which rises bold and bare, a mass of grey limestone surmounting all.

The house in which we were lodged was a mill belonging to an old Turk, close to the stream, and commanding a view of the place where the young men of the village came to fetch water. It was in itself a refreshing sight to see the luxurious enjoyment with which they waded

into the river after depositing their pitchers on the bank, then performed their ablutions, took a long draught, and at last leisurely rinsed and filled their vessels, as if the whole process were too delightful to be carelessly hurried over. For ourselves, however, we were glad to find that the water was deep enough for bathing—

“Beneath the plane-tree’s shade,
Whence flows the glittering stream”—

though swimming was hardly practicable. On the evening of our arrival, that we might have provisions for our mountain-excursion, we bought a kid for about four shillings, and, as it was skinned in our presence, we had an opportunity of seeing the way in which the operation is performed in these countries. After its throat had been cut, an incision was made in one of the hind legs, to which the operator applied his mouth and blew until the whole carcase was inflated beneath the skin, after which the rest of the process was accomplished with perfect ease.

We found that the friendly Bey had sent after us two guards and a *cavass*, or armed attendant (something between a footman and a gendarme), to serve as an escort on the mountain. This move was not to our liking, as we had found by previous experience that such gentry are an expense and an impediment, and in case of any real danger they are certain to leave you in the lurch. Accordingly, we did not hesitate long between politeness and expediency, but dismissed two of them; retaining one, whom we discovered to be well acquainted with the mountain paths, to serve as a guide. Subsequently, however, we were told by a competent local authority that it would have been wiser to take them, as there are generally several gangs of robbers on Mount

Ida—men who have run away from the conscription, or deserted from the Turkish army, and find the life of an outlaw the best suited to their circumstances—and that though the guard would have been no protection in case of falling in with them, yet, if you are accompanied by an escort when you are robbed, you can claim compensation from the authorities. But even then the delay involved in this process is such as few travellers can afford.

Between two and three o'clock the next afternoon we started to ascend the mountain. Our guide was a middle-aged Turk, a short but strong and active man, who carried in his belt a magazine of small arms—yataghans, pistols, and other weapons. We followed the easternmost of the two streams into which the river divides, and when we reached the foot of Ida began to mount gradually by a sloping path overlooking the most lovely dells imaginable, in the midst of a mixed vegetation of plane, oak, chestnut, fir, pine, alder, and arbutus. In one of these glades we found a tribe of Yuruk with their flocks. This race and the Turcomans are remains of the nomads by whom Asia Minor was occupied at a period anterior perhaps to the rise of the Ottomans. The two races are distinct; for, though the contrary of this has been stated,⁶ yet the Osmanlis in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles declare that they will not intermarry with one another, and have other marked points of difference. Thus the Yuruk are Mahometans, while the Turcomans are thought to have no religion, or, if they have any, it is a mystery, and they are reported to keep

⁶ E.g., in the article *Turkey* in the ‘Encyclopædia Britannica.’ It has also been attempted to show that Yuruk and Turk are the same name, an early form of which is supposed to be found in the Iyrcae, a hunting tribe mentioned by Herodotus; but this is improbable on every ground.

the Jewish Sabbath. Again, the Yuruk are wholly pastoral; but the Turcomans, in addition to the care of their flocks, employ themselves in cutting wood and collecting pitch, which they sell. In many parts of these forests we observed trees which were black and charred, and on inquiry we learned that they are fired in order to extract the pitch from them. The pitch of Ida was famous also in ancient times.⁷ The natives of these parts, too, are fond, we were told, of burning the trees for amusement, as a resinous pine serves admirably for a firework. It is a wonder that great conflagrations do not arise from time to time from this cause when the woods are dry, but we could not discover traces of any on a large scale.⁸

One object which we had in view, when we started on our expedition, was to visit the sources of the Scamander, which were said to flow from a fine cavern on the mountain side. Accordingly our guide, who had been properly instructed on this subject, conducted us up a side valley, near the spot where we had seen the Yuruk, to the mouth of a cavern, below which flowed one of the tributaries of the stream. Here he drew his yataghan, and after cleaving a pine branch into a number of small pieces, in a short time constructed a torch, which he lighted, and entered the cave. We followed him for some distance, crawling along with difficulty, up and down, through a narrow passage in the limestone rock, which was honeycombed by the action of water. However, when we had proceeded some 60 feet, finding it led to

⁷ "Idæas pices," Virg. Georg. iii. 450.

⁸ That this used to happen in ancient times is evident from the Homeric simile:—

ἥπτε πῦρ ἀΐδηλον ἐπιφλέγει ὑσπετον ὕλην
οὐρεος ἐν κορυφῆς, ἔκαθεν δέ τε φαλνεται αὐγή.—Il. ii. 455, 6.

nothing, we returned somewhat disconsolate, feeling that we had explored a curious cavern, but *not* the source of the Scamander. It bears the name of "the Lidja," *i.e.* "the refuge," being so called apparently from its suitability for a place of concealment. Persons who have travelled in the desert will remember that this name (for it is an Arabic word imported into Turkish) belongs also to the sacred valley in Sinai, in which is the "rock of Moses." No reason has been assigned, as far as I know, why it should have been attached to that place, but it may have been from its having at one period afforded shelter to numerous pilgrims.⁹

From this point we proceeded to mount on foot, driving our horses with difficulty before us, as in many places there was no track, and the wood was tangled or obstructed by felled trees. Towards sunset we emerged from the forest on to the open face of the mountain, commanding an extensive view towards the north ; and after making our way along this for some distance, selected a sheltered place for our bivouac, by the side of a tiny spring among the trees a little below the limit of vegetation. There are numerous and copious sources of water about the lower slopes of "many-fountained" Ida, but in these upper regions there are remarkably few. We subsequently found a fine spring between our resting-place and the summit, but its position was too exposed to allow of our camping near it. Our dragoman and the Turkish guide set to work at once to pile logs of wood and trunks of trees together, and made a huge bonfire, as well to keep off the cold as to scare the jackals and other unwelcome visitors, for this mountain is still what Homer described it, the "mother of wild beasts." That

⁹ See Ritter's 'Erdkunde,' xiv. p. 603.

there is abundance of game in these woods is shown by the name of the place from which we started, Evjilar, which signifies “the hunter’s village.” We all partook of supper off the kid, which had been roasted whole before our departure, and then composed ourselves to sleep round the fire. There was bright starlight, but no moon. On the Greek festival of the prophet Elijah, to whom the summits of many of the Greek mountains are dedicated,¹⁰ a large number of people from the neighbouring villages, sometimes as many as 300, pass the night on the mountain-side, and afterwards have service on the top. The modern Greeks, like their heathen forefathers, are everywhere fond of consecrating high peaks; but Ida has something of a sacred character about it, for it is mentioned by the mediæval Byzantine writers, together with Athos and Olympus, as having had in those times a number of monasteries and cells built along its sides. The ruins of some of these remained until the beginning of the present century.

The spreading daylight at last warned us that we must be up and on our way to the summit. When we emerged from among the firs we commenced the steep ascent over bare slopes and broken fragments of rock, and after an hour’s climbing reached “topmost Gargarus,” which is 5750 feet high,¹¹ but commands from its position a more

¹⁰ This circumstance is usually explained by the supposition, that in consequence of the great sacrifice on Mount Carmel, Elijah came to be regarded in the Greek Church as a patron of high places. Independently of this, when we consider the way in which heathen names and customs were adapted to Christian purposes in early times, it is far from improbable that from the similarity of names Elias was made to take the place of the Greek Helios, who possessed sanctuaries on many of the Greek mountains. (See Wachsmuth, ‘Das alte Griechenland im neuen,’ p. 23.)

¹¹ This measurement is taken from the Admiralty Chart, the most trustworthy authority. It is given by Choiseul Gouffier as 775 toises, i.e., 4650 French feet, or 5084 English feet. In Smith’s ‘Dictionary of Geography

than proportionately fine prospect. We had mounted at a good pace, but the sun was before us, and had risen half an hour when we arrived. The view was clear and cloudless, but the horizon was obscured by mist, as it usually is during the summer months in the *Ægean*, except now and then at sunrise. This effect contrasts somewhat strikingly with the distinctness of the nearer objects, and seems to be what Homer intends to express by the epithet *ἡεροειδῆς*, which is applied to “the *dim sea*,” and is also used of “the *far distance*,” for objects as much as 80 miles off may be seen notwithstanding.

The view towards the north had been gradually opening before us during our ascent; but that towards the south, which was far more beautiful, burst on us at once when we reached the summit. Far below, and separated from us only by a succession of finely-wooded mountain spurs, was the deep bay of Adramyttium, whose blue waters were dotted here and there with white sails; at its head was an alluvial plain stretching inland, while about its mouth the sea was studded with a number of small islands, the Hecatonnesi; beyond which rose the two peaks of Lesbos, separated from one another by an inlet; and far in the distance the heights of Chios, and on the neighbouring mainland those near Smyrna. To the south-east, as we looked into the interior of Asia Minor, range beyond range of mountains appeared, the last and highest of which was probably Mount Tmolus. We also conjectured that the easternmost peaks were the summits of the Mysian Olympus, on which we had been standing only a few weeks before. The view is

(s.v. Ida), the height is wrongly stated as being 4650 English feet, the mistake having probably arisen from copying the numbers in Kiepert's map.

divided into two parts by the long dorsal ridge of Ida, thickly clothed with the pine forests from which it derives its name (*iδη*, wood), and reaching from far away in the east to where it sinks into the sea at Cape Lectum, the point at which, according to Homer's description,¹² Hera landed in the company of the God of Sleep, when about to meet Zeus on Gargarus, and from whence she ascended over the heights, leaving her companion to keep watch on one of the lofty pines. Turning to the north, we looked over the plains we had crossed, and the hilly district which stretches towards the Propontis ; then the Hellespont came in view, the Plains of Troy, and the Hill of Sigeum, Tenedos with its white town, the Thracian Chersonese, and the broken outline of Imbros, beyond which, in the dim distance, as we stood ourselves on the watch-tower of Zeus, from whence he used to survey the combats of Greeks and Trojans, we descried far away the lofty peak of Samothrace, the station of Poseidon.

The flowers on and about the summit were numerous and varied, considering the stony character of the soil. Among those that I found were *dianthus neglectus*, *gypsophila cretica*, *pterocephalus plumosus*, *genista tinctoria*, *viola calcarata*, *scabiosa holoccrisia*, *centaurea aurca*, *thymus angustifolius*, *allium carinatum*. As the floras of high mountains are interesting for purposes of comparison, I will here mention those that I found shortly before this on the Mysian Olympus : *saxifraga porophylla*, *dianthus leucophaeus*, *vesicaria utriculata*, *galium purpureum*, *scilla bifolia*, *pedicularis comosa*, *leucanthemum cebennense*, *alyssum compactum*, *myosotis alpestris*, *erigeron alpinus*, *arenaria grandiflora*, *anthyllis montana*, *ranunculus montanus*, *androsace villosa*.

¹² Il. xiv. 284.

The cold was very great while we were on the summit, from the keenness of the east wind ; and accordingly, after staying there more than an hour, we were glad to return to our bivouac, from whence we descended with our horses by a steeper route than that which we had followed on the previous day, to a small open plateau on the mountain-side. In this were pitched the tents of a tribe of Turcomans, the most important we had yet met with, who were encamped here during the summer months. These tents were circular in form, and rounded towards the top, where there was an aperture ; they were composed of light trellis-work covered with felt, and seemed comfortably furnished inside with carpets and cushions. Though unlike any that I had ever seen before, they correspond in all their features to the description of the tents of the Calmuck Tartars. Their occupants had rather broad faces, high cheek-bones, black eyes, and swarthy complexions. The women were not veiled, and wore coins strung in their hair. One of them was occupied in making butter by the somewhat laborious process of rolling backwards and forwards on the ground a goatskin in which the cream was contained ; others were baking flat cakes on metal plates over a fire. They seemed pleased to see us, and brought us some coffee and a bowl of milk. The children were disporting themselves, in true English fashion, in swings attached to branches of the trees, showing the primæval character of that pastime. If for no other reason, these tribes are interesting as enabling us to realise what the Ottomans were before Othman's time ; for that people differed in no respect from the surrounding tribes, except in having a strongly marked character and settled purpose, which ultimately raised them to be one of the greatest nations that the world has seen. The monogram of the Sultan

is to this day an evidence of this early stage in their history; for, though now an elaborate specimen of calligraphy, it represents the old sign-manual, which was made by dipping the palm in ink and leaving its print on the paper. Few things in history are more striking than to watch a family or tribe, like the Hellenes in ancient Greece, the Ottomans, and many others, eliminating themselves in this manner by a process of natural selection, and rising above their neighbours.

Leaving our horses to follow us, we scrambled down a steep hill-side from the plateau into a gorge below, on the opposite side of which a pretty waterfall shot over the face of the rock. We clambered up a cliff by the side of this, and reached the entrance of a cavern, on descending into which we again came upon the stream, as it was hurrying along in the darkness to the point where it issued forth and formed the cascade. Again our guide's yataghan was called into requisition, and when a pine-torch had been made and lighted, we bared our feet and legs and waded up the stream, which was icy cold and deliciously refreshing after the temperature of the outer air, the heat of which had already become oppressive. After we had proceeded in this way for several hundred feet, the cavern opened out into a spacious hall, the sides of which rose gradually to a groove at the top, as in the "Ear of Dionysius," at Syracuse. At the farther end of this the clear water burst forth from the bowels of the earth. This was the source of the Scamander—a striking origin for any stream, from the grandeur of the cave and the copiousness of the water, which is almost a river at its birth, but from its mysterious seclusion especially suited to be the fountain-head of one of the great Homeric rivers. Its existence is just noticed by Strabo;¹³ the

¹³ xiii. i. § 43.

inhabitants of the neighbourhood call it *Buyuk Magara*, *i. e.*, the Great Cavern. Before we returned to daylight our Turk fired off one of his pistols, and the effect of this was remarkable ; for when the brawling of the stream was silenced by the reverberations, it seemed as if the water had suddenly ceased to flow.

From this point we descended to Evjilar, and from thence made our way the same evening through the plain to Beyramitch, where we were once more received by Achmet Bey. On our return journey to the Plains of Troy we diverged from our former route at Enaeh, in order to visit the fine Roman remains of Alexandria Troas ; these, however, have been described sufficiently often to render it unnecessary for me to notice them. It is owing to the British ambassador that they are still in existence ; for, had it not been for his remonstrances, the Turkish authorities would have blown them up, and carried away the stones as materials for building the arsenal at Constantinople. About half-way between Enaeh and this place is a hill called Chigri, which deserves more notice than it has hitherto attracted. It is a long and lofty mass of granite, on which are fine remains of a Greek city, with Hellenic walls built in parallel courses of masonry, of which in some places as many as fourteen remain ; but it has not been satisfactorily identified with any ancient site. By the middle of the next day we had returned to Bunarbashi, at the head of the plain of Troy.

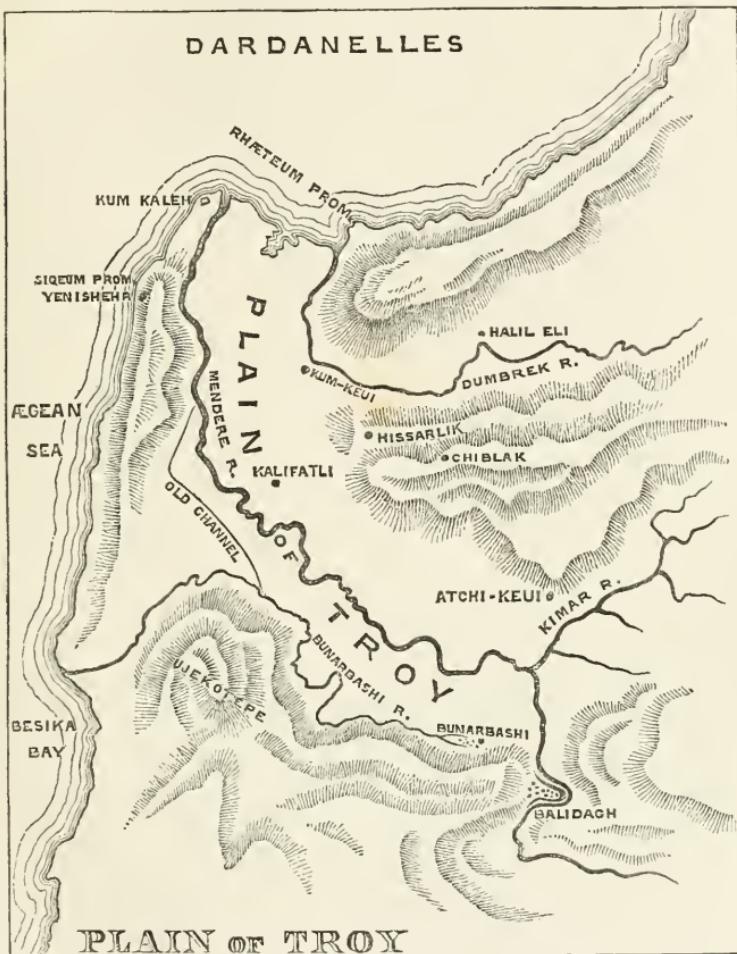
CHAPTER II.

THE CITY AND PLAIN OF TROY.

The Springs at Bunarbashi — Mode of treating the Subject — Accuracy of Homeric epithets and descriptions — Topography of the Iliad — The Springs near Troy — Correspondence with those at Bunarbashi — The Bali-dagh — Its Tumuli — View from it — Floods of the Mendere — Site of Troy — The Ileian Plain — Excavations on the Bali-dagh — Batieia — Atchi-keui — The Hanai-Tepe — Ilium Novum — Return to the Dardanelles.

JUST before reaching the village of Bunarbashi, we once more passed the springs from which its name, "the Head of the Waters," is derived. The springs themselves are called Kirke Gheuz, or "the Forty Eyes." As these have been the most important point in Homeric topography, ever since their discovery by Lechevalier towards the end of the last century, and as the question of the site of the city of Troy depends in no slight degree upon them, I propose that we should examine them with some care, and make them a starting-point from which to notice the principal objects and features of the country that seem to correspond to those which Homer describes. The plain of Troy has been a battle-field, not only of heroes, but of scholars and geographers, and the works which have been written on the subject form a literature to themselves. In this discussion, and the investigation of minute details which it involves, I do not wish to entangle my readers, but will confine myself for the present to some of the most general conclusions, referring those who are interested in the question to the

Appendix at the end of Volume II.¹ But, before entering on the subject at all, it is necessary to premise a few



The Plain of Troy.

remarks on the way in which the Homeric topography ought to be treated.

In the first place, it is well to remember that the state-

¹ See Appendix A, On the Topography of Troy.

ments of an ancient epic poet ought not to be criticised, as they have been by some writers, in the spirit of a land-surveyor. To take the numbers which the poet gives, and the distances which he describes, as a basis for exact calculation, is to disregard the poetic element in the narrative, and to treat verse as if it were prose. Numbers must be mentioned in the poem, and distances must, here and there, be either stated or implied, for otherwise the action would lack reality; but these are not to be regarded as literal statements of fact. All that we can expect is, that what is introduced should be in accordance with the general conception, and that the probabilities of the case should not be rudely violated; though even here considerable allowance must be made for poetic licence: as where Helen on the walls of Troy distinguishes and describes to Priam and his councillors the Greek chieftains who are marshalling their forces far off on the plain. In like manner we must not be surprised if some of the features of the ground are ignored, when it suits the convenience of the poet; as, for instance, the rivers, which are sometimes mentioned and sometimes omitted in connexion with the movement of the armies, as they pursue one another up and down the plain. And, generally, the limits of what is possible are overstepped, and absolute consistency is disregarded both in respect of time and place. Thus the fortification with which the Greeks protect their ships—a massive structure, provided with gates and towers—is erected in one day; and this is not merely vaguely stated, but we are told that they rose at early dawn to commence it and finished it at nightfall. Similarly as regards distance: though the space between the city and the Greek encampment is so great that until a late period of the war the ships are left without any defence, and that

when it is necessary for the Trojans to reconnoitre the movements of the Greeks a spy has to be sent to a point at a considerable distance from the city, yet the two places are frequently treated as if they were near one another, as when Hector, in his night bivouac in front of the Greek lines, sends to the city for oxen and sheep to provide a meal for his army,² and when the two hosts march from end to end of the plain several times in the same day.

Further than this—in attempting to determine the topography, the question that presents itself to us is not so much what was the actual site of the city, or what the actual features of the ground, but how were they conceived in the mind of the poet, and what were the objects that suggested these conceptions to him. And though this distinction in many cases will not involve a difference, yet in some it will prove to be of importance, where the realities have been adapted or idealised for the sake of poetic treatment. In this way, too, though we may not doubt the historical character of the Trojan war, yet we keep ourselves clear of the discussion of that question.

It might, indeed, seem an easier course to go a step further, and suppose the topography to be wholly imaginary, and to have existed only in the mind of the poet, especially as there is more than one place that claims to be the site of the city; but this we are for-

² This is in the evening which succeeds the combats described in Book VIII. The same night Hector is said to be encamped near the monument of Ilus (x. 415), which is in the middle of the plain (xi. 166, 7). He is there spoken of as being near the ships (ix. 76), and at the same time in front of Troy (viii. 560). In conceiving the scene, we feel that the whole thing is foreshortened. Elsewhere the ships are said to be “far from the city” (v. 791, xviii. 256), and it is possible to “wander” from one to the other (xviii. 286).

bidden to do by the contents of the poem itself. The geographical descriptions which the ‘*Iliad*’ contains are singularly exact and graphic—far more so than those of later Greek poets. Homer’s local epithets are, with rare exceptions, remarkably appropriate: nothing can better describe the thin cascade of the Styx in Arcadia than the epithet “down-dropping” (*κατειβόμενον*) which he applies to it;³ nor could the features of the Thessalian Olympus be better characterised than as “long,” “many-crested,” and “very snowy.” And though the descriptions of the position of towns, such as “craggy,” “lofty,” “spacious,” “abounding in vineyards,” “exposed to tempests,” are somewhat general in their meaning, yet, if they had been distributed at random as ornamental decorations, and not derived from a knowledge of the localities themselves, it would be strange if they were not frequently attached to the wrong places, instead of being as strikingly applicable as they are found to be at the present day. We should not then find Sparta so exactly described as being situated in a deep vale full

³ In saying this I venture to differ from my friend Mr. Clark, who in his ‘*Peloponnesus*’ (pp. 304-310) endeavours to show that Homer was not acquainted with the Arcadian waterfall. The passage in Hesiod, which describes the Styx as—

πολυώνυμον ὕδωρ
ψυχρὸν, ὃ τ' ἐκ πέτρης καταλείβεται ἡλιβάτοιο
ἴψηλῆς (Theog. 785)—

explains more fully what Homer meant by *κατειβόμενον*: indeed, Mr. Clark himself says that “the Homeric ideal is that of a great river falling down in a sheer cataract to the underworld, and there running with a mighty stream to infinite distance.” Now, considering that the waterfall of the Styx in Arcadia is almost the only cascade in Greece, and is of great height, and in a remarkably precipitous position, it is hard to believe that the coincidence between this and the Homeric description is merely accidental. No doubt the Styx was conceived of as a river of the nether world, but that does not prevent the idea of it from having been derived from a stream flowing in daylight, and being permanently associated with it.

of rifts and fissures, nor Epidaurus as being suited for the growth of vines, nor Tiryns, the ruins of which are the most massive in all Greece, as “well walled.”⁴ Again, to come nearer to the district of Troy, we find the features of the neighbouring region described with equal accuracy; the islands of Tenedos, Lemnos, and Imbros, in their respective positions; the peak of lofty Samothrace appearing over the intervening mass of the last-named island, and thus, as the author of ‘Eothen’ has so well described it, enabling Poseidon to look down from its summit on the plain of Troy; the Hellespont, with its rapid current, and the opposite coast of Thrace; and to the south the promontory of Lectum, which terminates the chain of Ida towards the Ægean, and Gargarus, the highest point in all the surrounding country, which is chosen as the fitting seat of the king of gods and men. When we find the geographical accuracy of the poet extending thus far, we cannot but feel that there is an antecedent probability in favour of its being found also in the locality which is the scene of the action, and this is confirmed by the fact that, though the plan of the topography of the poem is simple, yet the position of the sites and objects which it contains are definitely conceived. Indeed, on this point all those who have lately explored the plain, and among them several very able scholars, are agreed. Nor does this question seem to be materially affected by the independent question of the unity or plurality of authorship of the poem. Some of those who have worked out the details of the topography most carefully are advocates of a plurality of authors; and the latest explorer in the field, von Hahn, while he believes in the mythical

⁴ κοίλην Δακεδαίμονα κητώεσσαν, ἀμπελόεντ' Ἐπίδαυρον, Τίρυνθα τειχίδεσσαν.

origin of the story of Troy, is so firmly convinced of the accuracy of the description of the localities, that he considers it probable that “the form in which the ‘Iliad’ has come down to us in its essential features is derived from the Troad itself.”⁵

The topography of the ‘Iliad’ is somewhat of the following character. A plain of considerable extent, large enough for the movement of vast armies, extends between the city of Troy and the Hellespont, where there is a long line of beach inclosed between two promontories.⁶ The city is situated on a hill, behind which, at no great distance off, is another plain, called the Ileian or Idæan, close to the valleys of Mount Ida:⁷ the citadel or Pergamus is in a lofty position, while the lower part of the city reaches almost to the plain, where is the principal gate, called the Scæan, and in its neighbourhood two remarkable sources of water.⁸ In the plain in front of the city flow two rivers, the Scamander and Simois, running nearly parallel to one another, it would seem, for some distance, as one of the principal conflicts is described as taking place between them,⁹ and then joining their waters,¹⁰ and flowing in a united stream to the Hellespont. In the same part of the plain rises a conspicuous hillock, called Batieia, or “Bramble-hill,”¹¹ and a good way off, though in what exact direction we are not told, a tumulus, named after an old hero Æsyetes, stands in a commanding position, and serves as a point from which to reconnoitre the movements of the Greeks.¹² In addition to this, there is a high hill, called Callicolone or “The Beautiful Mound,” in the neighbourhood of the Simois,¹³ and other objects,

⁵ ‘Die Ausgrabungen auf der Homerischen Pergamos,’ p. 36.

⁶ Il. xiv. 33-6. ⁷ xxi. 556-561. ⁸ xxii. 147. ⁹ vi. 2, 3.

¹⁰ v. 774. ¹¹ ii. 811. ¹² ii. 791-4. ¹³ xx. 55.

such as the monument of Ilus, which are used as landmarks in the descriptions, but on which little stress can be laid. Any position, however, which is to claim to be the site of Homer's Troy, ought to correspond sufficiently well to the general description given above to account for the conceptions in the mind of the poet, allowance of course being made for such changes as may have passed over the country in the lapse of centuries.

To return now to the springs at Bunarbashi. Proceeding westwards from the village, you soon arrive at the two first of these, which are situated in the rocky ground at the edge of the plain, about sixty feet from one another, with a gnarled willow-tree growing between them. They are both about five feet square, and are encased on three sides by marble slabs, on which the Greek women of Bunarbashi wash their clothes ; beneath these the water gushes out from numerous sources. The streams thus formed join one another a little way below, and are shortly afterwards met by a rivulet flowing from the mountains, by the side of which another limpid spring issues from the rocks. From this group of fountains the little river continues its course towards the west in several channels, through a natural garden of its own making, receiving occasional contributions from other springs, until, after running somewhat less than half a mile, it is joined by a more copious stream, which rises hard by in a broad shallow basin, large enough almost to be called a small pond. This basin is enclosed by masonry, which is thought to be of great antiquity. All the environs of these sources and rivulets are of the most charming description, from the freshness of the grass, so rare a sight during the summer in these parched countries, and the abundant foliage by which they are

shaded. Besides the willows and other more imposing trees, there is a plentiful undergrowth of bright green fig-bushes, of agnus castus, with its lilac flowers, and of palluria, with its flat, circular, pale-yellow pods, which hang from the branches like so many coins.

Now, let us take Homer's description of the springs in the neighbourhood of Troy. It occurs in the story of the pursuit of Hector by Achilles in front of the city-walls, and is thus translated by Lord Derby :—

“They by the watch-tower, and beneath the wall
Where stood the wind-beat fig-tree, rac'd amain
Along the public road, until they reach'd
The fairly-flowing fount whence issued forth
From double source, Scamander's eddying streams.
One with hot current flows, and from beneath,
As from a furnace, clouds of steam arise ;
'Mid summer's heat the other rises cold
As hail, or snow, or water crystallized ;
Beside the fountain stood the washing-troughs
Of well-wrought stone, where erst the wives of Troy
And daughters fair their choicest garments wash'd
In peaceful times, ere came the sons of Greece.”¹⁴

In reading this passage, the first point that strikes us is that the description is definitely drawn, and is intended in the main to represent a really existing place. Next, the question suggests itself, in what sense are these fountains spoken of as streams of the Scamander? They cannot be the sources of that river, for these, as we have seen, are far away in Mount Ida—if, that is to say, the

¹⁴ Il. xxii. 145-156. The following are the most important lines :—

κρουνῷ δὲ ἵκανον καλλιπρόῳ, ἔνθα δὲ πηγαὶ¹
δοιοὶ ἀναίσσονται Σκαμάνδρου δινήεντος.
ἡ μὲν γάρ θ' ὑδατι λιαρῷ ρέει, ἀμφὶ δὲ καπνὸς
γίγνεται ἐξ αὐτῆς, ὡσεὶ πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο.
ἡ δὲ ἐπέρη θέρει προρέει εἰκυῖα χαλάξῃ,
ἢ χιόνι ψυχρῇ, ἢ ἐξ ὑδατος κρυστάλλῳ.

Mendere corresponds to the Scamander; and of this there can be little doubt, as it is so pre-eminently the river of the plain, from its size and body of water: the epithets, too, which are applied to the Scamander—"great," "deep flowing," "with deep eddies"—and the actions attributed to it, such as bearing along crowds of drowning men and horses,¹⁵ only suit its stream; and the appellation of Xanthus, or "yellow," which belonged to Homer's river, implies a current at times swollen and turbid, and not a quiet stream, with a short course, and derived almost entirely from springs.¹⁶ Probably the two best explanations of the difficulty are those which were given in ancient times.¹⁷ According to one of these, the fountains are called sources of the Scamander, as being the head-waters of a tributary of that river; and instances are not wanting to show that the intermediate course of a stream is sometimes ignored in this way at the fountain-head. According to the other, they are so called because, in accordance with an idea common amongst the Greeks concerning rivers, part of the waters of the Scamander were supposed to pass underground and reappear at this point. The latter interpretation is given very clearly by Cowper, who translates the passage thus:—

“ And now they reach'd the running rivulets clear,
Where from Scamander's dizzy flood arise
Two fountains.”¹⁸

Let us see now whether any correspondence can be traced between the springs described above and those

¹⁵ μέγας, βαθύβροος, βαθυδίνης.—Il. xxi. 10-16.

¹⁶ Lechevalier's idea, that the Bunarbashi river is the Scamander, and the Mendere the Simois, is now pretty generally given up.

¹⁷ Strabo, xiii. I. § 43.

¹⁸ The Scholiast on this passage says: διὰ τὸ Σκάμανδρος ὑπόγειος γενόμενος ἐν Ἰλίῳ δύνανται πηγὰς, ἀφ' ὧν οἱ κρουνοί.

which Homer mentions. The poet speaks of two fountains, one of which is cold in summer, while the other is warm *in winter* (for this seems to be implied by the antithesis), and is covered with smoke. In the literal sense of the words this certainly is not the case with the sources at Bunarbashi; but yet, on further examination, it may perhaps be shown that there is that in their appearance which would suggest to the poet the idea he has thus expressed. Though the springs are not two only, but many, yet they would naturally be conceived of as forming two groups, since one of the two rivulets is derived from those nearest to the village, while the other is drawn from the large shallow reservoir. Again, as regards the temperature, there does not appear to be any real difference between them, as most of them measure about 64° Fahrenheit; the variations which some travellers have observed are probably to be accounted for by their not having placed the thermometer close to the point from which the water issues, since everywhere else it is very soon affected by the heat of the atmosphere. But the smaller sources, from not being so much exposed to the heat of the sun, are naturally colder in summer than what is contained in the wide basin: in winter, on the other hand, as all the springs are deep-seated, and consequently of the same temperature all the year round, they must be warmer than the atmosphere, and must emit vapour in cold weather—an effect which would be far more visible over a considerable pool than over a number of small and scattered fountains. On this point I made inquiries from my Greek host, at Bunarbashi, George Menzous, and he assured me that he had often seen the sources smoking in winter. The popular imagination would naturally lay hold of these two peculiarities—the one spring or group of springs being cool in

summer, the other smoking in winter; and the poet, finding the tradition of a hot and cold spring existing on the spot, and admirably suited for poetic treatment, would make use of it for his own purposes, without caring whether it was literally true. It should also be observed, if we take the latter of the two explanations given above of the Homeric fountains being sources of the Scamander, how well adapted this position is to foster the idea that part of that river reappeared here after running underground, since the Mendere flows directly on the opposite side of the intervening hill to the south, and from thence makes a sudden bend before it emerges into the plain.

The spectacle here presented to us of two streams rising so near one another at separate points, and then by their combined waters at once forming a river, is one that would anywhere attract the attention of the geographer, and still more that of the poet; but especially is this the case in a country like Turkey, where water is so valuable and copious perennial streams so rare. There are not, indeed, many such in the whole of the Levant. Hence it is with good reason that this feature has been taken as a strong argument in favour of placing the city of Troy on the neighbouring heights behind Bunarbashi. There is no other position in the neighbourhood of the plain which possesses a source of water that can in any way correspond to those which Homer describes. Of course it is possible that these fountains may have disappeared, as some fountains are said to have disappeared in classical times; but, as a matter of fact, almost all the famous sources of antiquity—Castalia, Arethusa, Callirrhoe, Aganippe, and others—have come down to us, some of which are insignificant in size when compared with those we are speaking of. And when we

do find in a position otherwise suitable a remarkable natural object of this kind, corresponding fairly to the ancient description, we shall not be far wrong in concluding that they may be identified.

Let us now mount the hill behind Bunarbashi, or Bali-dagh, as it is called, and see whether it is an appropriate place for the site of ancient Troy. A gradual ascent of about a mile and a half from the village, towards the south-east, brings you to three tumuli, which stand near together at the commencement of a level ridge of some width : the first of these is conspicuous from below, and forms an excellent landmark to point out the direction to the summit. On the way two slight depressions have to be crossed, one of which is a sort of gully ; the hard limestone is half covered with a thin sprinkling of soil, but the dwarf oaks and undergrowth are plentiful, and serve as cover for game. We put up a hare and a large covey of red-legged partridges, as we passed through them, and several eagles were soaring above, probably on the look-out for such prey. The first tumulus is composed of small stones, and has a few shrubs growing about it ; on the side where the ascent was longest, it measured twenty paces from top to bottom. This mound has been sometimes called the tomb of Hector, but without good reason ; for if this was the site of Troy, the buildings must have extended much further towards the plain, and Homer relates that Hector was buried without the walls.¹⁹ The second and largest tumulus was opened some years ago by Mr. Frank Calvert, the Consul's brother, who carried a shaft into the centre of it, whence the interior lies exposed to view. The mound itself is formed of a mixture of earth and stones, but in the centre

¹⁹ Il. xxiv. 783, foll.

there is a structure, square in form, and measuring about 14 feet by 12, which rises from the rock which forms its base to the top of the mound. This is composed of large irregular stones, roughly hewn on the outward face alone, and put together without cement, the space in the interior being filled in with small loose stones. Its appearance is certainly not that of a place of burial, and it has been conjectured that it may have been the base of a public monument, or the foundation of an altar or shrine.²⁰ The third, which is smaller than the other two, and flat at the top, has more the appearance of a heaped mound of earth. In the neighbourhood of each of these tumuli is a pit, from which, perhaps, the materials may have been taken of which they were made.

The view towards the north from the so-called tomb of Hector is very extensive and striking, and the country is better seen from this point than from any other, because from the summit of the Bali-dagh the sources at Bunarbashi and the nearer part of the plain are excluded by this shoulder of the ridge. The character of the scenery is in marked contrast with that of Greece, in which sharply-cut mountain outlines and deep valleys or dry light-soiled plains prevail: here the low hills, which enclose the level ground, are rounded in form, and the patches and stripes of green, which remain in places even during the summer months, give evidence of an unusually abundant supply of water. The distant view comprises the European shore of the Hellespont, Imbros with the peak of Samothrace appearing over its broken summits, Tenedos lying close to the coast, and Lemnos forming a long line on the horizon, just over the east end of which

²⁰ See Mr. F. Calvert's account of the excavation in the 'Archæological Journal' for 1864, pp. 49, 50.

the conical shape of Athos is dimly seen. The plain of Troy is displayed in its whole length of seven miles,²¹ from the Dardanelles to the village of Bunarbashi, and about halfway between these points a ridge, which projects into it from the eastern side, forms a conspicuous object. But what most attracts the eye are the two rivers—the Mendere, in the middle of the plain, tracked through all its numerous serpentine windings by the willow-trees on its banks, until it trends across and flows close under the heights of Yenishehr into the Hellespont; and the Bunarbashi river, which is marked at first by the plantation at its source, and afterwards by the green marshes which fringe its sides, as it skirts the foot of the hills to the west, until it is carried off by the canal already mentioned into the blue Ægean.

From the three tumuli we pursued our way along the ridge towards the south, and in no long time came to an artificial mound, which runs across it, with some indications of a wall having surmounted it. A little further on we found a raised circle formed of small stones, sixty-five paces round inside, resembling in some respects the threshing-floors of the country ; it is impossible, however, that it could have been intended for that object, being at so great a height above the plain, and it is difficult to conjecture what purpose it could have served. Beyond this again the ridge contracts to a narrow neck, from which a short, but steep, ascent leads up to the summit. Here there was a level area of a few acres in extent, running from west to east, which evidently had been once an acropolis, for we found traces of ancient walls in numerous places both along the edges of the cliffs and

²¹ This and the other measurements I have given are taken from Dr. Forchhammer's map of the Troad, enlarged from that which he made in connexion with the English Admiralty survey.

across the angular projections of the ground, where it appeared that there had been towers. Below this level, on the northern side, close to the entrance, was an excavation, resembling the pits already noticed, only much larger. The Mendere flows round the base of this hill on three sides, at a depth of 400 feet below, and the descent to it is steep everywhere, but especially so towards the south, where the rocks are almost precipitous. In the sides of these rocks there are caves, the abode of numerous wild bees, and from the honey produced by these the entire hill has obtained the name of Bali-dagh, or "Honey Mount." The view in this direction, though in every respect different from that on the other side, is hardly inferior to it. The wild mountain masses rise close at hand on the further bank of the river, and the valleys, which descend from them, shape themselves with strange regularity into a succession of graceful curves, resembling the form of a theatre. In the neighbourhood of the stream, and closely backed by the mountains, lies the little plain which we crossed when first setting out for Mount Ida. The highest peak of that chain is excluded from view, but one of the lower summits rises finely in the distance, appearing at the end of the gorge, through which the Mendere passes on its way from Enaeh. All the features of the scene are bold, and spacious, and massive.

The Mendere, which is now a clear and quiet stream, covering only a small part of its wide sandy bed, is said to present a very different aspect in winter, when the floods come down from the mountains. Owing to the narrowness of the passage, through which it has to make its way at the foot of the acropolis, it then rushes through with a mighty current, and rises sometimes to the height of thirty or forty feet above its natural level.

At such times, when the rain falls for several days together on the higher ranges of Ida, the inland plain of Beyramitch is soon converted into a lake, as the valley which forms the passage from that to the lower plain is too confined to admit of the water being carried off with sufficient rapidity. Afterwards, when the clouds descend on to the lower mountains, the plain of Troy is also inundated ; for the Mendere, dashing through the gorge beneath the Bali-dagh, and being shortly afterwards joined by the Kimar, which drains a considerable valley towards the east, at once overflows its banks and covers the level land ; while the numerous springs and water-courses in the neighbourhood of the plain contribute an additional supply ; and, last of all, the Bunarbashi river, emerging from its channel at the point where the canal commences by which it is carried off to the west, resumes its ancient course and once more joins the Mendere. Again, when at the time of these inundations strong south-west winds prevail and obstruct the current of the Hellespont at its mouth, the lower part of the plain is still further flooded by the combined action of the sea and the rivers.²² It is such a scene as this which must have suggested the magnificent description of the combat between Achilles and the Scamander, in the 21st Book of the ‘Iliad,’ when the river-god rises in defence of his favoured city, and forces the hero from his stream, and pursues him with a mighty wave over the plain, calling to his brother Simois to hasten to his aid, until the whole region is inundated by their waters. The narrow valley which intervenes between the two plains was fabled to have been cleft asunder by the hand of Hercules, to whom great natural changes were usually ascribed ; and the story was embodied in a quaint

²² Forchhammer, ‘Beschreibung der Ebene von Troia,’ pp. 17-19.

etymology of the name Scamander, as if it was “the hero’s dyke” (*σκάμπα ἄνδρός*).²³

No one who stands on the summit of the Bali-dagh can fail to be impressed with the magnificence of the position, and its suitableness for the site of a great ancient city. You feel at once that it commands the plain. Indeed, a person accustomed to observe the situation of Hellenic cities, would at once fix on this as far more likely to have recommended itself to the old inhabitants of the country than any other in the neighbourhood. It combines all the requisites they were accustomed to look for, “a height overlooking a fertile maritime plain, situated at a sufficient distance from the sea to be secure from the attacks of pirates, and furnished with a copious and perennial supply of water, presenting a very strong and healthy position for the city; and for the citadel a hill beyond the reach of bow-shot from the neighbouring heights, defended at the back by steep rocks and precipices, surrounded by a deep valley and broad torrent, and backed beyond the river by mountains which supplied timber and fuel.”²⁴ And in addition to this, it fulfils in the most material points the conditions which are required for the site of Troy. The area on the summit, with its precipices, represents the “lofty” “beetling”²⁵ citadel; below this, the northern slopes afford ample space for an extensive city, reaching as far as Bunarbashi, where the Scæan gates would stand; the neighbouring fountains were those that were believed to well up from the Scamander, which flowed on the opposite side of the hill. The river

²³ Eustathius on Il. xx. 74. The old commentator himself reports the story as being that Hercules had opened the fountains of the Scamander.

²⁴ Leake’s ‘Asia Minor,’ pp. 279, 280.

²⁵ αἰπεινή, ὁφρυθεσσα.

which is thus formed, and which skirts the western side of the plain, is the Simois, which from its community of origin with the Scamander is rightly called its brother; while the greater stream, which runs parallel to it for some distance and formerly received the tribute of its waters, passes on towards the naval station of the Greeks on the Hellespont. The tumulus of Æsyetes, the look-out station of the Trojans, is recognised in the Ujek-tepe, in the direction of Besika Bay, which commands so extensive a prospect that an English traveller, when wishing to take a panoramic view of the plain and its environs, selected it as the best point of view;²⁶ and from its position in the neighbourhood of the Simois, it is probable that it also bore the name of Callicolone.

The correspondence between the plain at the back of the Bali-dagh and the Ileian plain of Homer is a further confirmation of this view of the site of ancient Troy. This place is introduced in connexion with the fight of Achilles and Agenor before the walls of the city. Before they engage, the Trojan hero, knowing that he is overmatched, debates with himself whether he should not escape from the battle-field, and, taking another direction away from the walls, fly to the Ileian plain, and so make his way to the valleys of Ida, and conceal himself there in the brushwood; then, as evening drew on, he might return to the city after refreshing himself by a bathe in the river.²⁷ The position we have

²⁶ Dr. Acland, in his ‘Panorama of the Plains of Troy.’

²⁷ εἰ δὲ ἀνὴρ ἐγώ τούτους μὲν ὑποκλωνέεσθαι ἔάσω

Πηλεύδηρ Ἀχιλῆι, ποσὶν δὲ ἀπὸ τείχεος ἄλλῃ

φεύγω πρὸς πεδίον Ἰλήιον, ὅφερ ἀνὴρ ἵκωμαι

Ἰδης τε κυνηγόος, κατὰ τε ῥωπήια δύω·

ἔσπεριος δὲ ἀνὴρ ἔπειτα λοεσσάμενος ποταμοῖο,

ἰδρῶ ἀποψυχθεὶς, ποτὶ Ἰλιον ἀπονεόμην.—Il. xxi. 556-561.

Whether the name of the plain is Ἰλήιον or Ἰδηῖον, it cannot evidently

selected for this spot corresponds singularly well to all that is here implied. It is away from the battle-field, and a safe place of refuge from lying on the other side of the acropolis. It is on the way to Ida; for all these heights at the back of the Bali-dagh—and, in fact, the mountains generally in the neighbourhood of the plains—are called by this name in Homer; as is shown by the poet's speaking of all the rivers in the neighbourhood of Troy as flowing from Ida, whereas only one of them rises in the upper part of the chain. Lastly, the river in which Agenor proposes to have his bathe can be none other than the Scamander, whose waters glide by in tempting proximity.

This height, then, and the region over which the eye ranges between it and the Dardanelles, we may regard as the scene of those events which the earliest epic poet has celebrated in undying verse. The level summit, on which we stand, is the Pergamus, which contained the palace of king Priam and the temples of the gods. The precipices that overhang the river are those from which it was proposed to cast the wooden horse.²⁸ Between the two rivers, in the plain below, the contending armies were arranged against one another, and the battle swayed furiously to and fro, and heroes engaged one another in single combat. Halfway to the Hellespont, where the Mendere crosses the plain, was the ford of the Scamander, by which the combatants passed it, and where Priam stopped to let his horses drink, when on his way to beg the body of Hector from his fierce con-

be the plain of Troy which is intended. The latter reading is better suited to the rest of the passage, but Heyne objected to it on metrical grounds, because that word has not the digamma, which Ἰλήϊον has. Notwithstanding this, Voss, whose translation is almost as good as a commentary, approves it; and Welcker adopts it unhesitatingly. ('Kleine Schriften,' ii. p. lxi.)

²⁸ Η κατὰ πετράων βαλέειν ἐρύσαντας ἐπ' ἄκρης.—Od. viii. 508.

queror.²⁹ Beyond, in the distance, on the level shore, the ships of the Greeks were drawn up within their entrenchments. It is a magnificent arena for a struggle in which Europe and Asia were the contending parties; too extensive, it may be, if measured by line and rule, for some of the movements described in the poem, but in no wise too spacious for the exploits of heroes of super-human power, or for conflicts in which the gods themselves descended from Olympus to take part.

In the spring of 1864, subsequently to my last visit to the Troad, the acropolis on the Bali-dagh was excavated by Von Hahn, the Austrian Consul at Syra in the Archipelago, an indefatigable explorer of the antiquities of Turkey, whose name will frequently recur in these volumes. The discoveries which he made, though they cannot be said completely to have set at rest the question of the site of Troy, have done a great deal towards it, as they have proved that a city of high antiquity must have occupied this position. Traces of the outer walls were found throughout their whole circuit, except on the southern side, where, it would seem, the steepness of the ground was regarded as a sufficient defence. The line of the foundations of the northern wall was complete from end to end. But the most important remains were those at the western extremity of the area, on either side of the ascent, by which the acropolis was entered. On the left-hand side a sort of bastion was found, and in its neighbourhood a gateway, in which the upper blocks on the two sides approach one another, and must have been originally covered by a horizontal lintel of stone. In these features it resembles the gateways which have been found in many of the ancient Greek cities. On the

²⁹ Il. xxiv. 350.

other side, at the south-west angle of the place, the oldest walls were brought to light. These were composed of polygonal blocks, carefully fitted together, which reminded Von Hahn of the architecture of Tiryns; and from the appearance of them he was led to the conclusion that the place must have been fortified in pre-Homeric times. But few works of art were found in the course of the excavations—a terra-cotta figure, some earthenware lamps, and a few other vessels, being almost the only ones which were dug up perfect. The coins, however, are of importance, as they furnish us with data for determining the time when the city was probably deserted. They are Greek coins, mostly of the neighbouring towns, and belong to the second and third century B.C.; but what is especially to be remarked is, that no Roman or Byzantine coins were discovered among them. From this we may gather with some confidence, that since the second century B.C. the place has remained uninhabited. What was the name of the Greek city which replaced the more ancient one, and to which most of the walls now remaining must have belonged, it is not easy to determine. The name of Scamandria, which was one of the Æolic townships of these parts, has been suggested, on account of the close proximity of the Scamander; but the evidence of the coins is against this, for Scamandria is mentioned by Byzantine writers as still existing in their times. Perhaps it may have been Gergithus, which is stated by Livy to have been handed over by the Romans to the people of New Ilium in the year 188 B.C., after their conquest of Antiochus.³⁰

³⁰ Livy, xxxviii. 39. To this view Mr. F. Calvert inclines, in his essay on the subject in the 'Archæological Journal' for 1864. The account of the excavations on the Bali-dagh is given in Von Hahn's 'Ausgrabungen auf der Homerischen Pergamos.'

When we left Bunarbashi, on our return journey, we descended in an easterly direction towards the plain, passing on our left hand a nearly isolated hill. This eminence, which is now called Garlik, corresponds very well in its position to the Homeric description of the hill of Batieia, in front of which the Trojan army was marshalled :—

“ Before the city stands a lofty mound,
In the mid plain, by open space enclos’d ;
Men call it Batæa ; but the gods
The tomb of swift Myrinna ; muster’d there
The Trojans and allies their troops array’d.”³¹

At the distance of somewhat less than half an hour from the village we reached the Mendere, which is bounded at the sides by steep banks, and extends about a hundred feet in breadth, the whole of its bed being now covered with a shallow stream. Even until the end of the summer it usually contains some water, though on two or three occasions during the last hundred years it is reported by travellers to have been dried up. After crossing it we proceeded to the farm of Atchi-keui, which lies on the slope of the hills on the eastern side of the plain, not far from the point where the Kimar joins the Mendere. At the summit of the rocky knoll above this place some persons have fancied that they discovered layers of stones and the sockets of a gateway ; but the traces of these are very questionable. There is, however, little doubt that it was the site of the ancient Village of the Ilians (*Ιλιέων κώμη*), and is therefore interesting, because that locality was regarded by as great an authority as Strabo in ancient times, and more recently by Ulrichs, as the site of ancient Troy. Yet,

³¹ Hom. Il. ii. 811 seq. (Lord Derby’s translation.)

even if this view were not overthrown by many other difficulties, such as the position of the city relatively to the rivers of the plain, the insignificance of the site would of itself render it highly improbable. There is, in fact, hardly any place in the neighbourhood less striking, and less likely to have attracted the original settlers.

Rather more than half a mile from the foot of the hills there lies an extensive marsh, which is green in summer-time and in winter forms a lake, and is called the Djudan. We had heard that within this two considerable springs had been lately discovered, and that this discovery had been connected with the claims of the neighbouring site, on the ground that they might represent the Homeric fountains; so we determined to visit them. When we arrived at the edge of the marsh, my companion waded into it, and when he had penetrated through the reeds for some distance, came upon a clear basin of water, apparently fed by underground springs, about twenty feet across. There is said to be another source not far from it; but we must suppose the ground to have altered considerably before we could conceive of these as corresponding to what Homer describes.

Another object of far greater interest in the neighbourhood of Atchi-keui, and close to the stream of the Kimar, is the Hanai Tepe. This is the largest of the many tumuli in the surrounding district, and its size is so great that Dr. Forchhammer, who accompanied the English Admiralty survey of the plains, questioned the possibility of its being an artificial mound. Shortly before my first visit, in 1853, it was excavated by Mr. Frank Calvert, the Consul's brother, who first sunk a perpendicular shaft through the centre, and then carried a horizontal shaft to meet it from the side. The investigation proved not only

that the tumulus was artificial, but also that it had risen to its present height by strata superimposed on one another at very different times. Just below the surface were Turkish tombs, belonging to a village which formerly existed on the hill-side hard by. Underneath these were found large Greek jar-tombs, resembling those which are found elsewhere in the Troad, composed of a coarse red clay, mixed with gravel, and laid in a horizontal position. Within these were human skeletons, placed on their backs, with raised knees. From the style of the art shown in the vases and glass phials which were arranged round the bones, their date must have been about the fourth century B.C. Below this again was a layer of a light whitish substance, which proved to be calcined bones, about six feet thick ; and intermixed with the lower part of the stratum were rounded river pebbles, bearing marks of violent heat. The ashes were perfectly dry, and so light that the labourers employed in digging through them were frequently unable to proceed from coughing. Then came a layer of wood ashes, intermixed with small pieces of charcoal and fragments of coarse pottery ; and between this and the solid rock, on which the whole rested, was a stratum of earth, two feet thick, containing the skeleton of a man extended at full length, with a large unhewn stone at its head. The entire height of the mound was fifteen feet. In opening the horizontal shaft a wall of huge rough stones was disclosed, five feet in thickness, and forming a circle ninety-five feet in diameter, which served to enclose the ashes, and rose as high as the top of that stratum. It is estimated to contain as much as 27,000 cubic feet of calcined bones.³²

This discovery was certainly a very remarkable one.

³² A full account of the excavation is given by Mr. Frank Calvert in the 'Archæological Journal' for 1859.

It proved that one, at all events, of the tumuli in the Troad was constructed for purposes of sepulture. The skeleton which was found at the bottom was evidently deposited at an earlier date than the mass of ashes, as the signs of the action of fire were altogether above it. It may not improbably have belonged to some ancient king or hero, and the fact of his bones reposing on the spot may have caused it to be regarded with veneration, and consequently to be chosen as a fitting place for a national pyre on some important occasion. What that occasion was, we have no means of ascertaining ; but the superincumbent jar-tombs show that it was earlier than the fourth century, and no supposition is so natural as that it was after some great battle fought at a remote period. During the truce which succeeded the first engagement in the 'Iliad,' we are told that the dead on both sides were burned, and that the Greeks raised a mound over the spot where their slain were consumed. In the account of the burial of Patroclus we have a description of the way in which such a monument was constructed, and it corresponds very closely to what is found in the Hanai Tepe :—

"Designing, next, the compass of the tomb,
They mark'd its boundary with stones, then fill'd
The wide enclosure hastily with earth,
And, having heap'd it to its height, return'd."³³

Or, in plainer prose, "they traced a round monument, and laid foundations around the pyre, and forthwith heaped earth on the top of it ; and when they had heaped up the mound they returned." It seems hardly improbable that this tumulus may have been erected by the Trojans at the time of the war of Troy, and that some

³³ Il. xxiii. 255-257. (Cowper's translation.)

tradition of the great battle after which it was raised may have come down to the Homeric period.

Leaving Atchi-keui on the following morning, we rode along the hills that bound the eastern side of the plain to the village of Chiblak, where the ground begins to descend towards the valley of the Dumbrek. This river runs parallel to the Hellespont, from which it is separated by the Rhoetean ridge, and enters the Trojan plain shortly before discharging its waters into the sea. At Chiblak we saw squared blocks of stone and capitals of Greek columns among the buildings, from which we gathered that an ancient site was in the neighbourhood ; and, after proceeding about twenty minutes further towards the north-west, we arrived at the ruins of Ilium Novum, which the Turks call Hissarlik, or “the place of a castle.” The situation is fine, as it commands the meeting of the two plains of the Dumbrek and the Mendere ; but the remains of the ancient city are few, being principally composed of lines of walls and pieces of mosaic pavement, which have been excavated. At the extreme angle was the acropolis, and close to this is the form of a theatre excavated in the hill-side, the same which we had seen from Yenishehr. This place in ancient times claimed to be the site of old Troy, and its inhabitants regarded themselves as the representatives of the Trojans. And though we cannot allow their claim, especially on account of their nearness to the sea—which formerly, when the alluvium formed by the rivers did not extend as far as at present, could hardly have been more than two miles off—yet there is an interest attaching to the place where Xerxes and Alexander offered sacrifices on the supposition that it was the ancient Pergamos, and which was revered on the same ground by many successive generations. In the view from this point the most con-

spicuous object is the Rhœtean promontory, with the tumulus on its side, which from very early times has been regarded as the burial-place of Ajax. That position was the one originally chosen by Constantine for his great eastern city ; so that it may be regarded almost as an accident that Constantinople, instead of this place, became the second capital of the Roman Empire.

From Hissarlik we descended to the Dumbrek valley, and from thence returned to the town of the Dardanelles by a more inland route than that by which we had come.

CHAPTER III.

MOUNT ATHOS.

Departure for Mount Athos—Thasos—Cavalla—The Holy Mountain—General Description—Vegetation, Scenery, and Climate—Rigorous Fast—Monastery of Vatopedi—Its Opulence—School of Eugenius Bulgaris—Village of Caryes—Exclusion of Females—The Holy Synod—Monastic Dispute—Phases of Monastic Life—Revenues—Numbers—Races—Pantocratoros—A Russian Dignitary—The Sand-bath.

ABOUT midday, on the 11th of August, we left the Dardanelles by the Austrian steamer, intending to disembark at the nearest point to the coasts of Mount Athos, which was the next object of our investigation. Shortly after sunset we were passing under the steep cliffs of Imbros, and during the night we left behind us the towering summit of Samothrace, the early seat of Phoenician influence in the *Ægean*, and of strange religious associations in the mysterious worship of the Cabeiri. At daybreak we touched at the port of Lagos, and during the morning were passing through the channel between the mainland and the wooded heights of Thasos. This island is described by Archilochus as “an ass’s backbone, covered with wild wood,” and the comparison is still appropriate, for, unlike most of the islands of this sea, it is still thickly clothed with trees, from which emerges the gaunt but picturesque line of the dorsal ridge which intersects it. The same idea of the resemblance between a bare range of limestone mountains and the skeleton of an animal is embodied in the name Oneium, or “the ass’s back,” which is given to

the chain that runs down to the Isthmus of Corinth; and the way in which these outlines are formed, especially in small islands, by the falling away of the earth from the rocks, is aptly described in a remarkable passage of Plato's 'Critias' by the similitude of the decay of a corpse.¹

At 11 o'clock we reached Cavalla, where we left the steamer. The position of this town is remarkably fine, and in many respects resembles that of Cadiz, though the ground is more elevated than in the latter place. It occupies a triangle of land, which projects into the sea with its apex towards the mainland, where it is joined by an isthmus to the grand mountains that rise behind. The Turkish walls by which it is surrounded, together with the minarets, and the castle which crowns the highest position, produce a striking effect; but the object which attracts the eye more than anything else is the lofty Roman aqueduct, that crosses the low ground of the isthmus with its massive piers, which support two tiers of arches; it is still used to convey water to the city. Another mass of building which is conspicuous from the sea on the western side, forming a long line of walls and cupolas, is the great educational and charitable establishment founded and endowed by Mehemet Ali of Egypt, who was a native of this place. This institution was once productive of great benefit, but, like most places of the kind when left to themselves, especially in Turkey, it has been much abused, and is now of little use. The great potentate always retained a warm regard for his birth-place, though he never revisited it. Another memorial of him is to be found in the numerous negroes

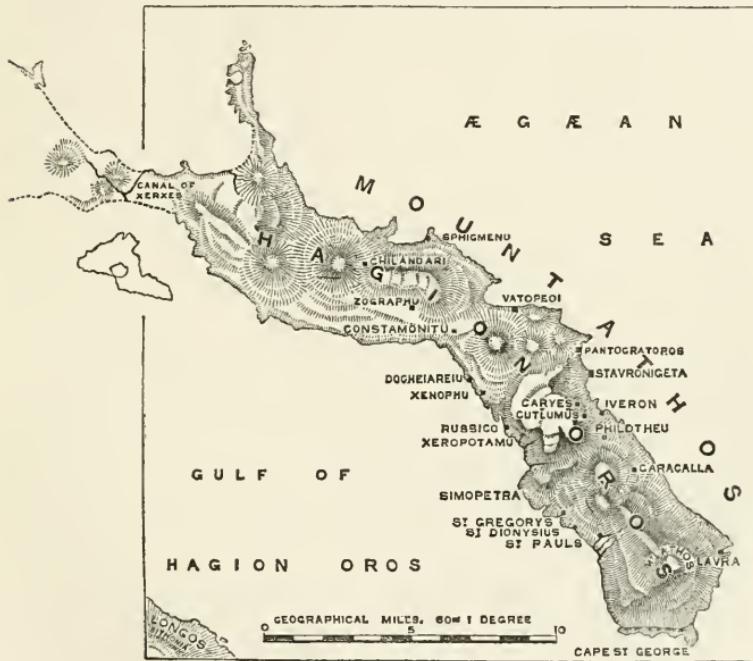
¹ Plato, 'Critias,' p. 111. B. λέλειπται δῆ, καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς μικραῖς νήσοις, πρὸς τὰ τότε τὰ νῦν οἶν τοσήσαντος σώματος ὅστα, περιερρήκηντας τῆς γῆς ὅση πίειρα καὶ μαλακή, τοῦ λεπτοῦ σώματος τῆς χώρας μόνου λειφθέντος.

who are to be met with in the streets of Cavalla, having originally come over from Egypt in consequence of the intercourse between the two places in his time. A more important person whose history is associated with this spot is St. Paul, of whom we read that, following the same route which we had just taken, he went "from Troas with a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis," which was the name of the city in ancient times. It was thus the first place where the Apostle of the Gentiles set foot in Europe.

The Turks are numerous in this town, but they are mostly poor, and their numbers are declining; a considerable amount of the wealth is in the hands of the Jews. The chief product is tobacco, which is extensively grown in the neighbouring districts. As the part of the mainland opposite Thasos was famed in ancient times for gold mines, we enquired whether any minerals were discovered at the present day; all, however, that we could learn was that quartz is found all about Cavalla, and that therefore it is likely enough that there is gold, but that no traces of mines had been discovered. We spent the day pleasantly at the house of our Vice-Consul, Mr. Maling, and at nightfall embarked in a sailing-boat, which we had engaged to take us across to Athos. After tossing and tacking for a long time under the western heights of Thasos, with plentiful experience of the light and fickle winds of the *Ægean*, about noon the following day we found ourselves approaching the monastery of Vatopedi, which is now the largest and most important of all the convents. Before we land, however, it may be well to say a few words by way of introduction, and then briefly sketch the general features of the Holy Mountain.

The easternmost of the three peninsulas, which stretch

like a trident from the coast of Macedonia into the north of the Ægean, notwithstanding its important position and striking internal features, does not seem to have risen to much importance before the Christian era. On one occasion it comes prominently forward, when Xerxes, warned by the destruction of the fleet of Mardonius on its rocky coasts, cut the canal through the isthmus, the traces of



Plan of Mount Athos.

which, notwithstanding the soil which has accumulated in the course of ages, are still distinctly visible. At a later period the architect Dinocrates proposed to carve its huge peak into a statue of Alexander. But the small towns that fringed its shores never attained to opulence, and are seldom mentioned in history. In Christian times, however, this spot has gradually become the seat of a

community, which is probably without a parallel in the world. At what period monks and anchorites first began to resort to Mount Athos, it is difficult to determine. Several of the monasteries possess relics and ancient works of art, which are described as presents from the Empress Pulcheria ; some of them refer their foundation to the time of Constantine ; and, though we may hesitate to accept these statements, and though a large number of monks seem to have come over from Egypt, when that country was overrun by the Mahometans, yet it is highly probable that hermitages and retreats existed there at a very early time. It is in consequence of this antiquity of the monastic community, and the freedom both from attacks and from external influences which their isolated situation has secured to them, that Athos possesses so many features of interest at the present day. Nowhere in Europe, probably, can such a collection of ancient jewellery and goldsmith's work be found as is presented by the relics preserved in the different monasteries ; nowhere certainly can the Byzantine school of painting be studied with equal advantage ; and some of the illuminated MSS. are inestimable treasures of art. The buildings of the monasteries are, with the sole exception of Pompeii, the most ancient existing specimens of domestic architecture ; and within their walls the life of the Middle Ages is enacted before your eyes, with its manners and customs, dress, and modes of thought and belief, absolutely unchanged. And it is no slight addition to the pleasure of a visit, that, in passing from one monastery to another, you are surrounded by scenery certainly not surpassed, and hardly equalled, by any in Europe.

This peninsula, which in ancient times was called Acte, and now is known as Hagion Oros or Monte Santo, is

about forty miles in length, running from north-west to south-east, and on an average about four miles broad. At the isthmus, where are the remains of Xerxes' canal, its breadth is about a mile and a half, and the ground is comparatively level; but from this point it rises in undulations until it forms a steep central ridge, which runs like a backbone through the whole peninsula. Towards the southern end it attains the elevation of about 4000 feet, and then, after a slight depression, suddenly throws up a vast conical peak, 6400 feet high, the base of which is washed on three sides by the sea. From the central ridge, lateral valleys and deep gorges run down to the coast; but the character of the ground on the two sides of the peninsula is entirely different, the western side being rugged and precipitous, while the eastern is comparatively soft and clothed with magnificent trees. The vegetation of this part surpasses everything that I have seen elsewhere: on the ridge itself and its steep declivities are forests of beech and chestnut; below this oaks and plane trees are found, together with the olive, cypress, arbutus, catalpa, and a plentiful undergrowth of heath and broom; in addition to which, as if the earth could never tire of pouring forth her stores, numerous creepers trail over the trees and hang in festoons from the branches. The peak itself, to which the name of Athos is now restricted, is, from its height and solitary position, its conical form and delicate colour, a most impressive mountain. It rises several thousand feet above the region of firs in a steep mass of white marble, which, from exposure to the atmosphere, assumes a faint tender tint of grey, of the strange beauty of which some idea may be formed by those who have seen the dolomite peaks of the Tyrol. I have already described how its pyramidal outline may be seen from the Plains of Troy

at sunset, when the faintness of the light allows it to appear, towering up from the horizon, like a vast spirit of the waters, when the rest of the peninsula is concealed below. Nor is it a less conspicuous object from the shores and slopes of Olympus, Ossa, and Pelion, on the opposite side. From its isolated situation it is a centre of attraction to the storms in the north of the *Ægean*; in consequence of which the Greek sailors have so great a dread of rounding it in the winter, that it would be no unreasonable speculation for an enterprising government to renew the work of Xerxes.

It may easily be conceived from this how exquisite the scenery is. Such combinations of rock, wood, and water, can hardly be seen elsewhere. The deep-blue expanse of the *Ægean* forms a part of every view, and on the horizon to the north and east appear the heights of Mount Pangæus, and the magnificent outlines of the islands of Thasos, Samothrace, Imbros, and Lemnos. The slopes of the Holy Mountain itself are dotted with farms and monastic buildings, about which lie bright patches of cultivated land, which have been reclaimed by the hands of the monks. Perhaps the most beautiful ride is along the south-east coast of the peninsula; in this part you are sometimes in the midst of brushwood close to the sea, sometimes in shrubberies excluding the sun, through which here and there you get peeps of the *Ægean* far below; from these again you penetrate inland, from time to time, into dells filled with planes and chestnuts, and embowered with creepers—a wilderness of leafy shade—places which Shelley would have delighted in; from the openings in which the majestic peak is frequently visible, its lower slopes melting into purple haze, while its summit assumes that unearthly,

ethereal, lilac-grey tinge, which I have before mentioned. The positions of the monasteries are singularly picturesque: a few are built in secluded positions on the higher ridge, but the greater number of them are situated on the seaboard, either at the mouths of gorges, or rising from promontories of rock which project into the sea.

The principal exports are wood, charcoal, and nuts, of which last article a large quantity is carried to Constantinople. The climate is healthy and the air extremely fine. The monasteries which lie under the western precipices are much exposed to the summer heat, and on some of those higher up the mountain snow often lies in winter for several days together; but on the whole the temperature is equable, and epidemics are almost unknown. It may have been owing to this that, in ancient times, according to Lucian,² the inhabitants of Athos were celebrated for their longevity, being said to reach 130 years of age. In one or two of the larger monasteries there are resident physicians; but many of the monks, partly perhaps from being unaccustomed to medical treatment, seem to take rather a fatalist view of diseases. At one place where there were lepers, I asked whether they came to Athos to be cured. "No, not to be cured," was the reply; "they get well whenever the Holy Virgin pleases:" and on another occasion some of them said, "We have brethren in the monastery who can treat slight maladies; the greater diseases we leave to God." We shall not perhaps be far wrong in tracing here the influence of Mahometanism. But the same feeling existed among the ancient Greeks as well. In the 'Odyssey,' when the Cyclops at the mouth of Polyphemus' cave

² Lucian, 'Macrobius,' cap. 5.

enquire the cause of his ravings, they are represented as saying, “It is in no wise possible to escape disease sent by mighty Zeus.”³

My companion and I had spent a week in this interesting place in the spring of 1853; but as there were many objects which we were obliged to leave unseen at that time, and many points in connection with the life of the monks which we were anxious further to investigate, we were glad to have this opportunity of revisiting it. We expected to find that the number of visitors would have greatly increased since our former stay, particularly as a Russian steamer from Constantinople had begun in the interval to touch on the western coast. We were consequently surprised to discover that fewer travellers come there now than formerly. At one monastery, when we asked the monk who waited on us whether they saw many strangers—“Oh! yes,” he replied, “they come from all the kingdoms of the world”—an instance of the Scripture phraseology which not unfrequently occurs in the monks’ conversation: however, when we questioned him more closely, he allowed that no one had been there for two years. On several occasions, when we asked what they supposed to be the reason of this change, we received almost identically the same answer, that they could not altogether account for it, but they thought “there was misfortune and poverty abroad in the world.” Eight years had sufficed to work numerous changes. Many of the old superiors, whom we had seen in 1853, were now no more; parts of two monasteries had been shaken down by earthquakes; other buildings had suffered from the effects of fires; and one monastery had altered its constitution and form of government. We

³ *νοῦσον δ' οὐπως ἔστι Διὸς μεγάλου ἀλέασθαι.*—Od. ix. 411.

noticed also, what to us was particularly agreeable, a marked improvement in respect of cleanliness in the rooms we occupied. In one respect our visit was somewhat ill-timed—for the day of our arrival coincided with the commencement of a fourteen days' fast, which precedes the festival of the Repose of the Virgin, the strictest in the year next to Lent. As the monks do not eat meat even on feast days, we had not expected to have our carnivorous appetites satisfied; but we were rather dismayed at finding that we could not even get fish—not because the monks wished to make us conform to their rules, for they gave us the very best of what they had, but because they did not catch fish at that time. On one or two occasions they paid us the acceptable compliment of sending out a boat to take some for us; but the greater part of the twelve days of our sojourn there we subsisted on rice, eggs, vegetables, and wine. We had, however, some compensation in being able to observe the extreme rigour of an Athos fast.

The name of the monastery under which we landed, Vatopedi (*Βατοπαιδίον*), is derived, according to the monks, from the legend that the Emperor Arcadius, when an infant, having been shipwrecked on the coast, was found miraculously preserved under a thorn-bush; and in acknowledgment of this, his father, Theodosius the Great, erected the monastery and called it Vatopedi, or “The bush of the child.” The story is embodied in an extremely rude and quaint woodcut of the monastery, which was presented to us on our departure; but in reality there can be little doubt that the name originally signified “The plain of thorn-bushes” (*Βατοπέδιον*), thus describing the comparatively level ground on which it stands. When we reached the shore we sent on our dragoman to give notice of our coming, and ourselves proceeded

to bathe; after which we also made our way to the monastery. The forms with which a traveller is received on his arrival are universally the same: after delivering his letter of introduction to the porter, who carries it to the hegumen or warden, he is conducted to the guest chamber, one of the best rooms in the monastery, generally commanding a superb view, where he is regaled with sweetmeats, arrack, cold water, and coffee; and when he is supposed to be sufficiently rested, he receives a visit from the superiors and some of the more intelligent monks, who, before they leave the room, inquire if he would like to "eat bread." There are ceremonies also which accompany his departure, though they are not so regularly observed. These are the stirrup-cup or "tooth-wash," as it is called (*πλυνοδόντιον*), a small glass of good wine, and apologies for any omissions which may be supposed to have occurred in his entertainment, offered by the superiors at the gateway. Besides the visits just mentioned, which are renewed throughout the day, we had frequent opportunities, during our sojourn in each convent, of talking to the monks in the courts and corridors, or while we were seeing in their company the objects of interest which they had to show; and as both parties were equally anxious to ask questions, the result was that our life on the Holy Mountain became one constant stream of conversation, from which we could not fail to learn a great deal, not only of the system and manner of life, but also of the feelings and modes of thought, of the monks.

The monastery showed evident signs of being in a flourishing condition. Its numbers had increased of late years, and it now contained 300 monks, together with servants and dependants amounting to about as many more. Since our last visit they had erected a hospital,

and they were engaged in rebuilding the walls and adjacent dwellings in one part which had been burnt down. The strings of well-fed mules, too, which stood outside the gate of entrance, suggested the idea of opulence. As seen from without, its appearance is very striking, from the vast extent of ground covered by its buildings, which, like those of all the monasteries, are enclosed by a high wall, and from the variety of forms it presents to the eye, and the rich colours of its lichen-covered roofs. Nor is the aspect of the interior less remarkable, from the quaintness and variety of the structures which surround the great court, and the tall campanile, which rises by itself in the centre of it. It is not my object, however, to enter into details about the various edifices, as I hope to give a more minute description of one of the monasteries further on; but the principal church should be noticed in passing, as it is certainly one of the most ancient on Athos. Although in most of its architectural features and elaborate decorations it is not distinguishable from ordinary Byzantine buildings, yet there are two peculiarities which argue a great antiquity. These are the mosaics above and at the sides of the western doors, and the fact that the eastern apse is polygonal instead of being semicircular. When these are found, there is every reason for believing that the structure to which they belong is not later than the tenth century. The monks ascribe it to Theodosius, but this, like most of their statements with regard to events of high antiquity, is deserving of no credit. One relic which it contains is the object of the greatest veneration. This is the girdle of the Virgin Mary, which appears to be of leather, as far as one can see through the glass case in which it is kept, and is ornamented with diamonds and numerous rows of rudely worked and very

ancient pearls. So great is the fame of its miraculous powers throughout the Ægean, that frequently, when a city is afflicted with pestilence, it is sent for to restore health to the inhabitants. There is also a cup of the Emperor Michael Palæologus, which is composed of a transparent kind of cement, said to be made out of twelve different stones ; it is supported by a metal stand of some height.

When Prince Alfred was in the Levant he paid a visit to this monastery, and the monks looked back to it with great pleasure. Among its inmates, at the time of our stay, were three Greek Bishops, one of whom, the Bishop of Varna, had retired thither of his own accord, from preference for the monastic life ; the others were in exile, for Athos, among the other purposes which it serves, is used as a place of rustication for refractory prelates, who are often removed from their sees on very trivial charges. One of them, the Bishop of Philippopolis, was said to have been deprived by the influence of the then French ambassador at Constantinople. I need hardly tell my readers that the bishops throughout the Eastern Church are taken from the monasteries, and not from the ranks of the secular clergy ; it may therefore be regarded, perhaps, as a merciful arrangement, that when they are banished, they should be sent to the place from which they came.

On the hillside, some way above Vatopedi, are the ruins of an extensive building, which was the scene of a great experiment on the Holy Mountain. It was a school, founded in the last century by the enlightened Eugenius Bulgaris of Corfu, in the hope of making the peninsula in some measure a centre of learning and education for the Eastern world. For some time it flourished, and was attended by numerous scholars, but, like other

schemes of the kind in Turkey, it ultimately failed, in this instance, rather on account of the opposition of the more ignorant monks and an uncongenial atmosphere, than from the remoteness of its situation. Any one who has seen the number of students that flock to the University of Athos at the beginning of a term from the neighbouring parts of Turkey, notwithstanding long quarantines and other obstacles, cannot but feel that such institutions are needed, and under more favourable circumstances might be successful. Still further up the mountain, in a sheltered nook, lies the Russian skete, or community, of St. Andrew, bearing the name of their patron saint. It is attached to Vatopedi.

The day after our arrival we proceeded on mules, lent to us by the monks of Vatopedi, to Caryes, or "The Hazels," the central and only village in Athos, where the Holy Synod of the mountain holds its sittings, and the Turkish governor resides. This village, which lies in a lovely position high up on the eastern slopes of the central ridge, in the midst of the trees from which it takes its name, consists mainly of one long street, with open shops forming a kind of bazaar, and is remarkable for its cleanliness, and for the entire absence of women and children. The exclusion of females from Athos is absolute: not only are women prevented from landing on its sacred shores, but no cow, ewe, shegoat, sow, hen, or other creature of the forbidden sex, is under any circumstances admitted. This restriction, which seems absurd at first sight, is in reality a singular parallel to some of the ordinances of the Mosaic law; such, for instance, as those in Lev. xix. 19, where garments of mixed linen and woollen texture are forbidden to be worn; the object being in both instances to enforce the main precept by keeping it before the mind of the

people in a number of minor analogous cases. Even the Turkish governor is obliged to leave his Harem behind him during his term of residence. This officer, the representative of the Porte, and the only Mahometan who is allowed to live here, is in reality of very little influence in the affairs of the monastic community, his duties being for the most part confined to the collection of taxes. The defence of the district is confided to a body of about twenty-five Christian soldiers, who may sometimes be seen in the monasteries, flaunting about in their gay Albanian dresses; but they are under the direction of the Holy Synod. The independence and immunities of Athos, in respect of which it is the most favoured part of the Turkish dominions, are of long standing. Shortly before the taking of Constantinople the monks of that period agreed to submit to the rule of Amurath II., on his guaranteeing them the privileges which they then enjoyed, and this engagement has been observed with tolerable fidelity by later Sultans. The tribute, when divided among the different monasteries, amounts to about ten shillings a head, and they are not exposed to any irregular exactions.

The Holy Synod of the Mountain is a representative body, which, like the Councils of our two English Universities, manages the general affairs of the community at large, without interfering with the independent self-government of the several monasteries. Each of the twenty monasteries sends a representative (*ἀντιπρόσωπος*), who is maintained at Caryes at the expense of his society; besides these, there are four presidents (*ἐπιστάται*), taken in rotation from the different monasteries, who form the administrative body; and one of them again, according to a fixed cycle, takes precedence of the rest, and during his year of office is called "The First Man of

Athos." After paying a visit to the Turkish governor, and presenting to him the *firman* of the new sultan,⁴ which he kissed and reverently pressed to his forehead, we were introduced to the "First Man," who was a monk from Vatopedi, and gave him an introduction which we had brought from the Patriarch of Constantinople. We were then conducted to the chamber of meeting, a room of moderate size, with a divan running round three sides of it, where ten of the representatives were waiting to receive us. We were seated at the upper end, and after the customary refreshments and some informal conversation, received a commendatory letter to the monasteries, written by the secretary in ancient Greek, a very curious document, stating the object of our visit, and requesting them to entertain us and pay attention to our "creature comforts" (*σωματικὴν ἀνάπαυσιν καὶ ἄνεσιν*), to show us all we desired to see, and to "speed the parting guest" from place to place by means of the mules of the monasteries (*διὰ Μοναστηριακῶν ζώων*). This letter serves as a passport, to show the monks that your visit is sanctioned by the authorities; as a stimulus to their hospitality it certainly is not needed, for it would be hard to find elsewhere such unvarying kindness and liberal entertainment as the traveller meets with here. He is not expected, as in the smaller Greek monasteries and the conventional establishments of the west, to defray the expenses of his entertainment by a donation; and the means of transit are provided for him *gratis*, both by land and water. A present to the servants, however, will generally be found acceptable.

After the assembly was dismissed, several of the caloyers, as the Greek monks are called (*καλόγερος*, a

⁴ Abdul Aziz succeeded to the throne early in the summer of 1861.

good old man), accompanied us to the school, which has been established at Caryes for the education of some of the younger monks, two on an average being sent by each monastery. It is a commodious building, with well-arranged class-rooms, and a library containing editions of the classics, and standard authors in several European languages ; but it had a deserted aspect, as the school was closed at this time, in consequence of a dispute which had arisen amongst the monasteries. The history of this I will now relate, not from any wish to expose the quarrels of my hospitable entertainers, but because it illustrates in a curious way the influence of the Great Powers, and of England in particular, in very remote districts. Who would imagine that Great Britain could be deeply involved in a dispute of the monks of Athos ?

The subject which was the origin of the dispute carries us back to the Emperor Alexius Comnenus. That eminent personage founded the two monasteries of Cutlumusi and Pantocratoros, the former of which is close to Caryes on the mountain side, the latter on the sea-coast below. He endowed them with adjoining lands, and one farm belonging to Pantocratoros lies within the territory of Cutlumusi. A dispute arose about a watercourse, that fruitful source of litigation, connected with this piece of ground. The Holy Synod took up the question, and cited the warden of Cutlumusi to appear before them ; this however he refused to do, as he knew beforehand that judgment would be given against him, and maintained that they had no authority in the matter. The Cutlumusi monks had a further story, about a Russian general who, during a long stay on Athos, had become enamoured of some MSS. in their library, and had fomented this quarrel for his own purposes ; but it seemed to rest on a somewhat doubtful foundation. However,

one morning a number of the members of the Synod coming with soldiers, broke open the doors of the monastery, seized and imprisoned the most influential monks, and stripped the warden naked, in order to search his clothes for papers, on a suspicion of treachery. It happened, however, that these monks were from the Ionian Islands, and therefore British subjects; so when they saw that they had no hopes of redress from other quarters, they appealed for protection to the consuls at Salonica and Cavalla. Mr. Wilkinson, the English consul at Salonica, laid the matter before the Pasha of that place, whom he found already preparing for a voyage to the Holy Mountain; accordingly when he arrived there, and the case was put into his hands, he decided that the ejected monks should be reinstated. After procuring the acquiescence of the monks generally in various changes, such as the dismissal of the guard of soldiers, the Pasha returned home laden with presents, or, more properly speaking, plunder, in the shape of works of art, which he had obtained from the monasteries. At a later period, however, by means of representations from the Russian embassy at Constantinople, the decision of the Pasha was reversed in several points; in consequence of which five of the monasteries, which disapproved of the whole proceeding, seceded, and withdrew their representatives from the Synod. This was the state of things at the time of our visit, but there was some hope of a reconciliation being brought about by the good offices of Mr. Wilkinson. Subsequently, when we were again at Salonica, in the summer of 1865, we learned from that gentleman that this had been effected shortly after our departure, and that outwardly, at all events, harmony had been restored.

We were at that time so accustomed to look on the

position of the inhabitants of the Ionian Islands towards the English as one of undisguised opposition, that it seemed curious to find them relying so much on the protection of England when at a distance from home. But, as one of them frankly admitted, it was only in the Islands, where the fact of the Protectorate was before their eyes, that they grumbled, while here they enjoyed all the advantages of a powerful connection. This however led to much bitter feeling and jealousy of England on the part of the other caloyers. "Whatever fault is found with an Ionian monk," they would say, "he cries directly, 'Hands off! I'm a British subject; I shall appeal to the English consul.'" But I am bound to add that the feeling of these Ionians towards an English traveller was of the most friendly description, and that the disinterested kindness which we received from many of them was remarkable, even in the midst of the hospitalities of the Holy Mountain.

One of the greatest sources of interest in a visit to Athos consists in this, that here can be seen in one view all the different phases of Eastern monastic life. First of all there are the hermits, who dwell, like St. Antony, the first anchorite, in perfect solitude, practising the sternest asceticism. In the retreats (*καθίσματα*) we find small associations of monks living together in retirement, and working for a common stock. Again, when a number of these retreats are assembled round a central church, a skete (*ἀσκητήριον*) is formed, which in some cases differs from a monastery only in not possessing an independent constitution. And lastly, there are the regular monasteries, each enjoying a separate corporate existence, possessing lands on the mountain, and generally also beyond its limits, and having the right to be represented in the Synod. These again must be divided

into two classes, according to their different forms of government ; the one kind being *Cœnobite*, where there is one warden or hegumen, and a common stock and common table ; the other the *Idiorrhythmic*, where “everyman is a rule to himself,” and the constitution is a sort of republic, the government being in the hands of two superiors annually elected ; in these the inmates generally take their meals in their own cells, and both in respect of laying by money and the disposal of their time are in a position of comparative freedom. Here also a wealthy monk, if he desires it, can have as many servants as he chooses to pay for. The Idiorrhythmic rule is a departure from the original form, and of somewhat recent introduction ; and it is a significant fact, that by far the greater number of the monasteries on the eastern slopes have adopted the less stringent discipline, while those which lie in more secluded positions under the rugged precipices of the western side, have, with only two exceptions, remained Cœnobite. The monastery of Cutlumusi had been Idiorrhythmic at the time of our former visit, but subsequently returned to the stricter rule, and its inmates maintained that the change had produced great benefit. In the Cœnobite convents the monks generally communicate once a fortnight, and this is unusually often, according to the practice of the Greek Church in this matter. The lands which these monasteries possess out of Athos are partly in Macedonia, partly in Thasos, Lemnos, and other islands of the Ægean ; but by far the greatest part consists (or, I should rather say, consisted) of estates in the Danubian Principalities, which were made over to them in former centuries by Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia. From these sources some of them derive large revenues, but of late years their prosperity has been considerably checked by debts in-

curred during the Greek War of Independence, when a large body of Turkish soldiers was quartered on them for nine years, from 1821 to 1830.

The qualified statement, which has been introduced above with regard to their possessions in the Principalities, is rendered necessary by the important changes which have taken place in respect of these since our visit. They have, in fact, been confiscated by the government of that country. Against this the monks, naturally enough, exclaim with great vehemence, but the rights of the case seem to be as follows. When the local monasteries in Wallachia and Moldavia, to which these properties belonged, were originally established, their founders intended that they should be of service to the country as places of refuge and means of assisting the needy. But in order to secure the good management of the land and its produce, they were attached to one or other of the large convents in Greece or the Holy Land, from which they received their superior, on the understanding that whatever surplus accrued from the property, year by year, in addition to the regular fixed income of the local monastery, should be paid over to the convent on which they were dependent. In the course of time, however, the relative position of the two parties was changed, and the local monasteries became completely subject to the patron convents, so that they were regarded merely as their farms, and the income derived from them went entirely out of the country. The Principalities now reclaim their lands, as having been alienated from their original purpose; and their cause appears a just one, though the change must fall with great severity on the Greek monasteries, as the present system has existed for many generations, and they are accustomed in no slight degree to look to this source for their support. The

question was carefully considered by the European commission which was sent into the Principalities in 1857, and after investigating the original state of things, and finding that the circumstances were such as have just been stated, they advised a return to the system intended by the founders, only with the substitution of a fixed annual payment to the Greek monasteries for the former fluctuating income, on condition that they should resign all control and all further claims. When Prince Couza proceeded to strike the blow by which the Greek monks were deprived of their possessions, he promised that an indemnification should be paid to them once for all ; whether they will ever receive this, however, may be considered more than doubtful. These losses, no doubt, will greatly cripple their revenues, but it is thought by persons who are acquainted with their affairs that the lands and funds which they possess in other quarters will be sufficient to enable them to exist.⁵

The whole number of monks on Athos is believed to be about 3000 ; besides these there is a fluctuating population of *seculars* (*κοσμικοί*), some of whom reside permanently in the monasteries as servants or labourers, though without taking any monastic vows, while others come for a time from the adjoining country, and afterwards retire to their homes. These may perhaps amount to 3000 more. The number of monks in the separate monasteries varies from 25 to 300, but about 100 is the commonest number. It seldom happens, however, that all are present at the same time, as a certain proportion are generally engaged in superintending the outlying farms. We found it extremely difficult to get any accurate information on these points, owing to that

⁵ The whole question is very clearly put in an article in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' for Oct. 1, 1862, p. 728.

singular dislike of statistics which is so characteristic of Orientals. A Turk, when asked a question of figures, to save himself further trouble, replies at once with a good round number ; a Greek winces, utters a peculiar exclamation expressing something between doubt and annoyance, and when he sees no means of escape tells you as much as he knows himself. "How many monks are there in the monastery ?" "Do you mean *this* monastery ?" "Yes ; how many are there in this monastery ?" "Eigh ! a great many." "But what do you suppose is the exact number ?" "Eigh ! I don't know ; *about* 80 or 90." We seldom arrived at anything more definite than this. By far the greater number of the monks are Greeks by race, natives of free Greece, including the Ionian Islands, or from the Turkish dominions ; two of the monasteries, however,—Zographu and Chilandari,—situated in the northern part of the peninsula, are exclusively inhabited by Bulgarians and Servians, and have the service in the Slavonic tongue ; there are also a few Georgians in the Iberian monastery ; and there are a great many Russians, who are found partly in the Russian monastery and the sketes which they have founded, partly scattered about among the other monasteries. It was curious to observe the contrast between the children of the north and the south, and I could not help fancying that the Greek regarded the Russian as a large uncouth being, somewhat like the Troll of the Norse tales, simple-minded and easily outwitted. An incident will soon occur in the course of our narrative, which will illustrate what I mean. Notwithstanding this, as the Russian Church has been the progressive branch of the Eastern Church since the time of Peter the Great, so the Russian monks are the most progressive element in the society of

the Holy Mountain. The other monks are aware of this, and used to speak of their good bell-ringing and harmonious chanting, which is indeed an agreeable contrast to the dismal drone of the Greek services ; in addition to this, the only printing-press on Athos is in the Russian monastery.

When we had arrived at Caryes, we took up our quarters at the neighbouring Cutlumusi, where we were received with especial attention as being Englishmen, in consequence of the suit that was pending. On the evening of the same day we descended to the other principal in the dispute, the monastery of Pantocratoros, or The Almighty. Our path lay over steep slopes, commanding views of extraordinary beauty, from the hanging woods which rose above us to the ridge of the mountain, the wide expanse of sea below, and to the south the winding shores of the peninsula, and undulations of fertile land, diversified with the white-walled retreats of the monks, and reaching far away to the base of the great peak, which displayed its fullest proportions, and appeared indescribably beautiful in the light of the westering sun. Pantocratoros is a small monastery, containing only forty monks, and its position is confined, as it is placed on a rock which is washed on two sides by the sea, with a little port running in on the land side, where small vessels can lie. In consequence of this it is much crowded in its arrangements, and the buildings have to be stowed away wherever room can be found. One of the superiors, a venerable-looking old man, had left the monastery at the time of the War of Independence, when the Turks came to Athos, and fled to Greece, where he joined the insurgents, but subsequently he had returned. We were sitting with him and some of the others in a room overlooking the sea, which

was dashing in below, when suddenly they exclaimed, "Ah! here he is; here comes the Archimandrite!"⁶ As we looked up, in expectation of some great dignitary, there walked, or rather rolled, into the room a burly man, whose light hair and ruddy complexion formed a complete contrast to the appearance of the other monks. He tumbled himself down on the divan, and turning to us, exclaimed, laughing, "Good evening; you are welcome: I am a Muscovite—a barbarian!" We returned his salutations, and then I asked, "As there are so many monasteries in Russia, why do you come to Athos? Why do you not remain in one of the establishments in your own country?" "It's because of the women, sir," he replied; "it's the women! In Russia there are women in the monasteries, and I can't endure them; and therefore I come here, where there are no women."⁷ And then he went off into a rigmarole story in broken Greek, until the rest of the company told him, in very plain terms, that he was a bore, and talked unintelligible nonsense; on which he took himself off, but, before the evening was over, showed that he was not offended, by sending us some tea (*τζαϊ*), which is found wherever the Russians are.

Among the relics preserved in this convent there is a very old book containing the Gospels and other writings, mentioned by Mr. Curzon, probably of the eleventh century, in extremely minute handwriting, accompanied by small delicate illuminations: the binding, which is of silver, and very curious, is embossed with strange figures, and has chainwork at the back, which yields when it is

⁶ This name, which in Russia still retains its original sense of "head of a monastery," in the Byzantine Church is simply titular.

⁷ In most of the Greek monasteries, except those of Athos, women of advanced age are admitted as servants. These are called *κυλόγυραι*, that name being the feminine of 'caloyer.' Nunneries, as such, are almost unknown in the Greek church.

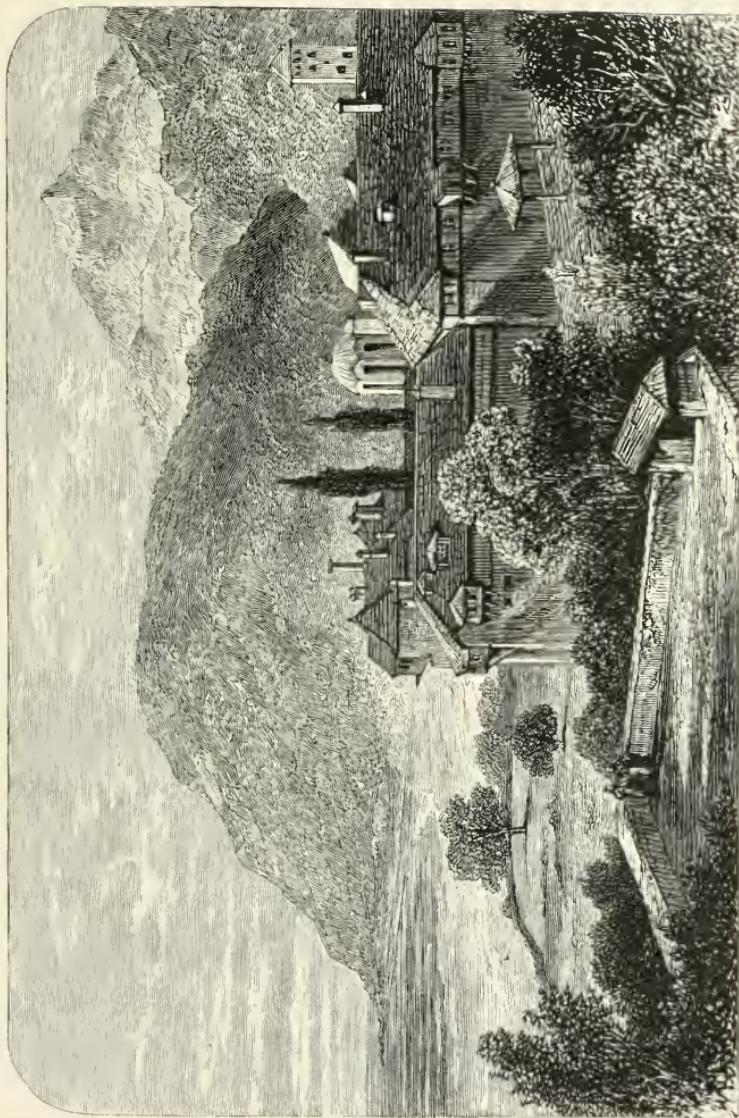
opened. The only other thing which deserves special notice is the frescoes of the interior of the church, which are ancient and well executed, the arrangement of the groups of figures being more carefully studied than is usual in Byzantine painting. Those of the outer part of the building have been restored, but exactly in the old style. Leaving Pantocratoros, we rode southward along the coast in the direction of Iveron, and stopped on the way for a short time at the intermediate monastery of Stavroniceta, which, like the one we had just left, stands on a projecting mass of rock, whose steep sides descend below it into the sea, and rises conspicuous with its massive tower. Beyond it there is a small skete belonging to Cutlumusi, from which that society procures its fish. Just before passing this we saw a patient undergoing the sand-bath, a curious and primitive remedy for rheumatism. He was buried in the shingle up to his chest, his head and shoulders alone appearing, and an umbrella was spread over him, to protect him from the scorching rays of the sun.

CHAPTER IV.

MOUNT ATHOS (*continued*).

Monastery of Iveron — Description of it — The central Church — Byzantine Pictures — The Refectory — The Library — Miraculous Picture — Theory of Eastern Monastic Life — Occupations of the Monks — Their love of tranquillity — Fallmerayer influenced by it — Mysticism — Monastery of Philotheu — Caracalla — The Lavra — Relics and Jewellery — Retreat of “the Forerunner” — A Conversation on Canals — A Painter — Legends of the Peak — Ascent to the Summit — Festival of the Transfiguration — Light of Tabor.

OUR next resting-place was the convent of Iveron, that is, of the Iberians or Georgians, which was founded by three persons of that nation at the end of the tenth century, and stands near the sea, between steep wooded hills, at the mouth of a deep valley, which runs down eastward from the central ridge. As it ranks the third in number and importance, and is a good specimen of the larger Idiorrhythmic monasteries, I propose to describe it somewhat minutely. In shape it is an irregular square, and its appearance is extremely imposing, as the high stone wall by which it is surrounded makes it resemble a vast castle. The domestic buildings, however, by which this wall is surmounted are entirely at variance with this military aspect: they are of wood, singularly picturesque, projecting at different levels and angles, and supported by sloping beams, which lean like brackets against the wall. From the roofs of these houses rise numerous chimneys, many of which, like the house-fronts themselves, are painted with bright colours; behind these appear the domes of the church; while at the back of all a massive tower, which was probably used as a watch-



MONASTERY OF IVERON MOUNT ATHOS

tower in more troublous times,¹ forms a conspicuous object. Close to a dry river-bed, which lies behind the monastery, is a poor-house, where distressed seculars are provided for; and on the heights above is a skete for lepers, who, as well as madmen, are sent to the Holy Mountain to be taken care of. It is no slight praise to the monks that they provide a refuge for these outcasts of society. Again, on the hills to the north, is a skete for Georgians, to which nation also 10 of the 200 inmates of the monastery belong. The cemetery may generally be distinguished by a group of cypresses; but there are no tombstones, as the bones are removed a certain time after interment, and laid in a common heap.

Entering the monastery by the gateway, we pass through a dark and winding passage, intended apparently to baffle a besieging force, and find ourselves in the great court, in the centre of which, detached from the other buildings, stands the principal church. What first attracts our attention on looking round is the extreme irregularity of everything. In one place you see a wooden cloister, in another an outhouse; here a chapel appears, there a vine-covered trellis peeps out, and the mixed brick and stone work of the more regular buildings contributes to increase the variety. Not the least conspicuous objects are two magnificent cypresses with velvet foliage, which rise near the east end of the church. It is this picturesqueness which constitutes the charm of domestic buildings of the Byzantine style, to which all these monasteries belong; for they cannot aspire to beauty, and

¹ Abp. Georgirenes ('Description of the present state of Samos, Patmos, Nicaria, and Mount Athos') says, in A.D. 1678, speaking of the monastery of Lavra (p. 88), "They have a strong magazine, and a sentinel perpetually standing to give notice of any Corsair;" and of St. Gregory's (p. 95), that it is "near the sea, and much infested with pirates, for want of fortifications and men to defend it, having but sixty monks."

the few which are built regularly are far from pleasing. As wood is so much used as a material for building, many parts of these structures must be of a comparatively late date ; but still they represent to us very fairly the original edifices, in consequence of the conservative and traditional spirit of the Greek Church, which appears nowhere so strikingly as on Athos ; in accordance with which every part, when it falls into decay, is repaired so as to correspond in style, even if it is not exactly similar, to the original design.

Let us now visit what in all the monasteries is the most important building, the central church, entering at the west end, and observing as we pass the subjects of the frescoes, which are disposed in regular order along the walls.² We first find ourselves in the proaulion, or porch, a corridor supported on the outside by light pillars, running the whole width of the building : in this part are represented scenes from the Apocalypse, especially the punishment of the wicked ; and in one place there are pictures of the Ecumenical Councils, that of Nice being particularly striking. In this Athanasius is represented as a young man stooping down to write the Creed, while Arius is in the act of disputing between his two great adversaries, Spiridion and Nicholas, and on the right of this group is a band of Arians, dressed as philosophers, some of whom are coming into the council chamber to recant their errors, whilst the rest are being driven into a prison by a man armed with a club. Passing onwards from the Proaulion, we enter the narthex, or antechapel, which contains representations of various forms of martyrdom : on either side of the central door, which leads into the

² For the plan of a Byzantine church, though differing slightly from that which is here described, the reader is referred to the ground-plan of the church in the monastery of St. Demetrius, on Mount Ossa, in vol. ii.

second narthex, are figures of SS. Peter and Paul. These narthexes, which are divided by walls from one another and from the body of the church, seem originally to have been intended for catechumens and penitents, and must have been introduced into the monastic churches more for the sake of maintaining the usual type, than with a view to actual use: as it is, they are employed for the celebration of the more ordinary services, and when the body of the church is too small for the number of worshippers, they serve to provide additional room. In the second narthex are frescoes of saints and hermits, who look down in grim solemnity from the walls: the hermits especially are most striking objects, being almost human skeletons, and stark naked, except for their long grey beards, which reach to the ground. From this we pass into the main body of the church, which is in the form of a Greek cross, with a central cupola supported on four pillars, which symbolize the Four Evangelists. At the east end and in the transepts are semi-cupolas, but the whole of the sanctuary is concealed by the Iconostase, a wooden screen reaching nearly to the roof, and most elaborately carved and gilt, in which are set pictures of our Lord and saints. The position of two of the frescoes in this part is invariably the same in all the monasteries: in the cupola is a colossal figure of the Saviour, and over the western door of entrance a representation of the Repose (*κοίμησις*) of the Virgin. Other parts of the walls are covered with Scripture subjects, and generally in one of the transepts is a group of young warrior saints, among whom St. George is always conspicuous. From the drum of the cupola hangs an elegant brass coronal, and from this are suspended silver lamps, small Byzantine pictures, and ostrich eggs, which are said to symbolize faith, according to a strange but beautiful

fable, that the ostrich hatches its eggs by gazing steadfastly at them : within this coronal again is a large chandelier. The floor is ornamented in parts with *opus Alexandrinum*, a kind of inlaid work in white marble, porphyry, and *verd antique*; and here and there are placed lecterns, elaborately decorated with mother-of-pearl and tortoise-shell. The stalls are ranged all round the sides, and are provided with *misereres*, which, however, are seldom used, as the monks generally stand during the whole service.

At first sight the general appearance of the building seems rather marred by the multiplicity of details crowded into so small a space ; but, when the eye is once accustomed to this, the effect is magnificent, from the brilliancy of the ornaments and the harmonious though sober colours of the frescoes. In the Byzantine pictures, as well as the frescoes, which one sees on Athos, the drawing and perspective are generally bad, and when the description of strong passion or violent action is attempted, they are often indescribably grotesque ; and we look in vain for the delicacy and spirituality of Fra Angelico ; but the more passive feelings, such as humility, resignation, and devotion, are often admirably expressed, with a grace and sweetness which are rarely found in the specimens by which Byzantine art is represented in Western Europe.³ There was, however, one artist of real power, some of whose frescoes still remain in the peninsula, called Panselenus, a name but little known away from Athos. He lived in the 11th or 12th century, and is called by M. Didron "the Raphael, or rather the Giotto, of the Byzantine school." His most famous works are in the church at Caryes, and

³ M. Didron says ('Manuel d'Iconographie Chrétienne,' p. xlv.), "La beauté des anciens ouvrages de cette école est incontestable." He attributes the oldest of the frescoes to the ninth century.

consist of single figures and groups of saints, the drapery and arrangement of which are excellent, and the faces full of originality and power. There are also frescoes attributed to him in the monasteries of Pantocratoros and Lavra, and though we are naturally suspicious of the indiscriminate use of a distinguished name, yet these are so superior to the ordinary pictures, as to make it probable that they are by his hand.

Returning to the external porch of the church, we see two *Semantra*, or instruments for calling the brethren to prayers. One of these is a long flat board, narrow in the centre, so that it may be grasped by one hand, while it is struck with a wooden mallet by the other. The second is of iron, resembling a piece of the tire of a wheel, which is struck with a hammer. The monotonous sound of these instruments may often be heard in the dead of night, summoning the caloyers to the midnight service. Outside the west end of the church is an elegant cupola supported on pillars, inside which is a stone basin, where the holy water is blessed which is used in the ceremonies of the Epiphany and in other rites of the Greek church. Opposite this is the Refectory (*τράπεζα*), a building in the form of a Latin cross, along the walls of which, inside, are ranged small stone tables, one of which at the further end is placed so as to form a high table. At the angle, where one of the transepts joins the nave, is a pulpit, attached to the wall, from which the homily is read during meals. Most of the refectories are decorated with frescoes of saints along the side walls, and a representation of the Last Supper over the high table; but here the structure is of a recent date, and consequently plain, as the monks have not yet been able to afford the decorations. Over the entrance of the refectory is a bell tower, in the lower story of which

a new library has been constructed ; to this some of the books were being removed from the old library, a confined room over the church porch. The contents of these libraries consist mainly of Greek ecclesiastical writings, together with a fair number of classical authors and mathematical works. I noticed also a good many books published at Venice at the beginning of this century. In this library there is a curious Greek translation of Goldsmith's history of Greece, which was "well spoken of" by the monks. The best account of the libraries generally will be found in Dr. Hunt's notice in Walpole's 'Turkey'; of the MSS. a full description is given in Mr. Curzon's 'Monasteries of the Levant.' I shall therefore only occasionally refer to some of the most remarkable. Many of these are fine works of art ; but the effects of damp and neglect are sadly visible. It is possible that unknown literary treasures may still be concealed in these libraries ; but they have been so carefully examined by *savants* from Russia and elsewhere, that it is hardly likely. It is, however, the opinion of competent authorities, that the contents of the liturgical and musical manuscripts are of great value for those subjects, and that the publication of the charters and numerous other documents would throw a vast amount of light on Byzantine history.⁴

Among the other buildings which are most worthy of notice are the kitchen, a curious square building, in the centre of which is the hearth, and a long chimney running up through the roof ; the underground cellars, which contain some huge tuns ; and the numerous chapels and oratories, which are found in all parts of the building. There are

⁴ See Gass's essay, 'De Claustris in Monte Atho sitis Commentatio Historica,' pp. 60, 61.

as many as twenty-two of these,⁵ and one, which is built near the gateway, contains a miraculous picture of the Virgin, the story of which is worth relating, as a specimen of the numerous legends which abound on Athos, and are believed and told by the monks with the simplest faith. It was cast into the sea near Nicæa, but was carried safely to the Holy Mountain. When it had been brought to the monastery, and the monks were deliberating where they should place it, it knocked several times on a spot close to the gate, to signify that her chapel should be erected there; and from this circumstance she is called the Portaitissa, or Portress. In one part there is a scar, where an unbeliever stuck his lance into it; blood issued immediately; and the malefactor was converted and died a saint: he is represented in a fresco in the narthex of the chapel, where he is called “The Barbarian Saint.” The face of the picture, like most of the sacred paintings of the Greek Church, is in the hardest style; but it is surrounded by embossed work, or sheathing, of gold, which is covered with the most magnificent jewels. A copy of it was taken to Russia in the 17th century, by order of the Patriarch Nicon, and is still to be seen at Moscow.⁶

Having thus taken a survey of the buildings of the monastery, let us enquire, what is the employment of the pale, grave men, with long beards and flowing hair, dressed in dark blue serge gowns, and high caps, who move about its court and its corridors. But first, perhaps it may be well for us to notice some of the points in

⁵ It is said that there are in all 935 churches, chapels, and oratories, on the Holy Mountain.

⁶ See Stanley’s ‘Eastern Church,’ p. 424. The legend, with some variations from the account given me by the monks, is related at length in the ‘Travels of Macarius,’ ii. p. 172.

which the life of the monks of Athos differs from our ordinary ideas of monastic life.

In the first place, then, only a small proportion of these monks are *clergy*, and the clerical office is in no way connected with the monastic profession. Even in the large establishments, such as Vatopedi and Iveron, it is not usual to find more than ten or twelve of the community in Holy Orders ; and at Philotheu, the smallest of the monasteries, there were but three priests, just enough to carry on the services. Still less are they *teachers* or *missionaries*, except in one instance, the Bulgarian monastery of Chilandari, where, of late years, a system has been established of sending a number of ordained monks into Bulgaria on a sort of home mission, to assist the parish priests in extensive districts. This "Apostolic" system, as they call it, is said to have worked well, but it is wholly an excrescence from the monastic life of Athos. Again, they are not *students*, or *learned men*, though from the way in which the books have been used and marked in the libraries, there is evidence that there were such among them in former times ; and they have traditions of a period, shortly before the taking of Constantinople, when teachers went out from this place, as a centre, to the whole of the Eastern church. Now, however, the libraries are rarely opened, and the monks do not pretend to make study a part of their occupation. Yet they profess a desire for learning, and we perceived many signs of a move in that direction, especially in the wealthier convents. The existence of the school at Caryes is in itself a proof of this : the books, too, which they possess are beginning to be more cared for than formerly, and here and there catalogues have been made : one or two of the monasteries also have lately sent some of their younger members to the University of Athens

to study at the expense of the society, in order that they in turn may become teachers to the rising generation. A few of the monks we found to be acquainted with the ancient Greek authors; and one or two would have passed an excellent examination in the details of Greek history. One remarkably intelligent young fellow, who had left his convent on a former occasion, against the will of the Hegumen, in order to get instruction at Athens, amused us by remarking, "I don't get on particularly well with Hellenic (ancient Greek); Xenophon and some other authors I can read easily enough, but I find the speeches in Thucydides so very hard!" We consoled him by telling him that he was not singular in his difficulties. Modern languages are almost entirely unknown; only a few could speak a little French or Italian; and theology, to which at least one would expect that some time would be devoted, is hardly in a better condition. In fact, the great proportion of the caloyers are of the class of peasants and artizans, and are wholly uneducated and ignorant.

Still the ludicrous inexperience of ordinary things, which has been attributed to them, certainly does not exist now. There may be monks who have never seen a woman, or who believe that Western Europe is governed by an Emperor of the Franks, or that England is situated in London; but anyhow the generality must not be estimated from them, any more than from the more intelligent men whom I have mentioned above. There is hardly one monastery in which they do not from time to time see some newspaper, either the 'Byzantis' of Constantinople, or one of the Athens journals; and a good many had seen, and some even took in, the Greek newspaper published in London, the 'Bretannikos Aster,' which was in high favour on account of its illustrations

Accordingly, one of the commonest questions to be asked us was, whether the Queen had recovered her health; and they were quite ready to talk on such subjects as Victor Emmanuel and the state of Italy, the war in America, and the Atlantic Telegraph, the Leviathan, as they called the ‘Great Eastern,’ the Suez Canal, and similar topics of the day. All these things, no doubt, were regarded from a very distant point of view: indeed, it is the effect of a secluded spot, like the Holy Mountain, where the routine of life is so unexciting, and the pulse seems to beat faintly, to make even a stranger look upon the events of the world around “as through a veil.”

But if the monks of Athos are neither clergy, nor missionaries, nor students, yet they realize the primitive idea of monasticism in a way in which it is not realized elsewhere. When Antony and his followers withdrew to the deserts of Egypt, their object was not the pursuit of learning, or the benefit of their fellow-men, but retirement from a dangerous and distracting world, and leisure for devotion and religious exercises. This idea of monastic life is still maintained in the Eastern Church; and accordingly, as in those early times there was no distinction of Monastic Orders, so here one rule alone is followed, that established by St. Basil. Six or seven hours of every day, and more on Sundays, are occupied by the Church services; and on some of the greater festivals the almost incredible time of from sixteen to twenty hours is spent in church.⁷ Their life is one of the sternest bodily mortification. In the Cœnobite convents

⁷ For an account of the services and other details connected with the monasteries, the reader is referred to an elaborate and impartial article in the ‘Christian Remembrancer’ for April, 1851, to which I am much indebted.

they never touch meat, and rarely in the Idiorrhythmic. Nearly half the days in the year are fast days, and on these they take only one meal, which is generally composed of bread, vegetables, and water: and during the first three days of Lent those whose constitutions can stand it, eat *nothing*. In addition to this they never get an unbroken night's rest, as the first service commences between 1 and 2 A.M. The remainder of their time which is not occupied in public prayer is spent by the Superiors in the management of the affairs of their society, and by the lower monks in various menial occupations which are required of them. There is, however, a class intermediate between these two, whose time cannot be so easily accounted for. In the Idiorrhythmic convents any person who pays on entrance a sum equal to about 45*l.* of our money, becomes permanently free from any obligation to work in the monastery. Those who are on this footing must have a considerable amount of spare time, and, as far as we could discover, but scanty means of employing it. In some of the Cœnobite monasteries the brethren work in the fields; but even in these it is only for a few hours in the day; and in general this kind of labour, and other outdoor employments, such as fishing, are left to the Seculars.

As the system of life which has just been described is not such as to prove attractive to ordinary men, it will naturally be asked, what are the inducements and motives which lead men to come to Athos, and from what classes the monks are chiefly drawn, being, as they have been called, *gens æterna, in quâ nemo nascitur*. I have already stated that most of the inferior monks belong to the class of peasants and artisans: a large number of these come to this place early in life, between the ages of 15 and 25 years, being naturally quiet men,

and disposed for a religious life (*θρήσκεια*). Of those who come at a more advanced age, some have led irregular lives and desire to repent of their sins ; some have been monks at other convents, such as those of Jerusalem and Mount Sinai ; while others have been engaged in trade, and similar employments. Among those to whom we talked on the subject were a grocer from Corfu, a tailor from Constantinople, a merchant from Syra, a sailor from Cephalonia, and a leech-gatherer from Larissa in Thessaly, who had been employed there by a man who rented the monopoly of leeches from the Government. Very few, even of the superiors, are above the class of tradesmen or merchants. But when we came to enquire, further, what constituted the attractiveness of the monastic life, we constantly received the same reply—tranquillity (*ἡσυχία*), rest of body and soul, which was valued by some as freeing them from temptation and giving them time for devotion, by others as securing them comparative ease ; by the greater number probably from a mixture of these two feelings. But to the Christian subjects of the Porte the first attraction is the security which they enjoy here, and freedom from the ill-treatment and exactions to which they are exposed elsewhere. No one could travel through the parts of Macedonia and Albania, which we visited later in the summer, and hear, as we heard, both from the natives themselves and from less prejudiced sources, of the utter insecurity of life and property among the *rayahs*, and their sad persecution by their Turkish oppressors—murders, violence, robberies, and extortion, being quite ordinary occurrences—without often saying to himself “Who would not gladly be a monk on Athos, rather than suffer these miseries ?”

The monks of Athos are not the only persons in the

present day for whom the “tranquillity” of which we have just spoken has had powerful attractions. Fallmerayer, the German historian and man of letters, who is best known for his thankless attempt to prove that the modern Greeks have no Hellenic blood in their veins, confesses that, during his visit to this spot, he was sorely tempted to yield himself up to it. He thus describes his own feelings and those of the caloyers. “‘Forsake the world and join us,’ said the monks; ‘with us you will find your happiness. Do but look at the Retreat there with its fair walls, at the hermitage on the mountain, how the westering sun flashes on its window-panes! How charmingly the chapel peeps out from the bright green of the leafy chestnut forest, in the midst of vine-branches, laurel hedges, valerian, and myrtle! How the water bubbles forth, bright as silver, from beneath the stones, how it murmurs amid the oleander bushes! Here you will find soft breezes, and the greatest of all blessings—freedom and inward peace. For he alone is free, who has overcome the world, and has his abode in the laboratory of all virtues (*έργαστήριον πασῶν ἀρετῶν*) on Mount Athos.’ It was spoken in perfect sincerity; the pious fathers knew their man; they recognized in him the melancholy, the longings, the appreciation of solitude they knew so well, and the magic influence that wild woods and the fresh scenes of nature exercise on world-weary souls. I was to set up my abode in the neighbourhood of their holy society, not as a monk (for that a special vocation was required), but as an independent associate; and was to pass my time, free from all constraint, like a temporary participator in earthly joys, in prayer, in recollectedness of spirit, in devotional reading, in cultivating my garden, and in wandering alone, or with others, through the woodland thickets, but

evermore in peace, until the thread of life should have run out, and the dawning light of the brighter world appear. * * * * * It was, I confess, a seductive proposal.”⁸

He then proceeds to describe the jar of party conflicts, the confusion of thought, the weary search after knowledge, and all the other disadvantages which accompany the progressive movement of western civilization, and from which he might have for ever freed himself by embracing this proposal.⁹ Many others, when placed in the same circumstances, have felt like him. Many an Englishman, when, after being long engaged in the turmoil of business or political life, he has visited such a place of retirement as the Grande Chartreuse, will have understood the longing for the permanent enjoyment of the life of tranquillity. We cannot wonder, therefore, if beneath the sky of Greece, and in the midst of so many favouring circumstances, it proves highly attractive to the Oriental temperament. This state of mind has naturally given birth at various times to different forms of mysticism, the most remarkable phase of which is found in the tenets of those who from this cause received

⁸ ‘Fragmenta aus dem Orient,’ ii. p. 1.

⁹ Fallmerayer soon changed his mind when he got back to Salonica. His recantation occurs somewhat further on in his work, but it is amusing to put the two passages side by side:—“Thirty days’ penitential living on the Holy Mountain had forcibly reduced my spirits to a low pitch, and lent an impulse to the longing to enter once more within the sphere of European life. If the moral law could only be satisfied at such a price, I honestly confess that, little as I care for elaborate enjoyments, I should still occupy a very low position in the scale of righteousness.” And again:—“The eagerness with which, immediately after my journey to Athos, I devoured the political contents of the Augsburg, Paris, Malta, and Smyrna newspapers, perused the scientific reviews, and foraged in the select library of our hospitable consul, clearly showed how empty and unenjoyable life would be without the range of European ideas.”—pp. 147-150.

the name of Hesychasts (*ἡσυχάζοντες*) or Quietists. Of these persons, and their dogma concerning the light of Tabor, we shall have to speak further on. Whether religious contemplation forms any part of the life of the monks of the present day, it is very difficult to discover. Amongst those of the lower grades, of course, we should not expect to find it ; the sum of their religious views is that heaven is to be won by mortification of the flesh and constant attendance on the Church services. But in the ranks of the more educated monks there is reason to believe that some devote themselves to it, and it is affirmed that the images which fill their minds are mainly drawn from the book of Revelation, and that in some circles traces of the spirit of mediæval mysticism may still be discovered.¹⁰

Continuing our journey from Iveron the next day, we rode for some distance along the coast, and then struck up the side of the mountain, through groves of ilex, arbutus, and catalpa, to Philotheu, which lies in a retired but pretty situation, rather more than a mile from the sea. It is the smallest monastery, containing only twenty-five monks, and very simple-minded they seemed. They spoke with pleasure of the smallness of their society, as a source of quiet, but in winter, they said, the cold was very great, owing to their elevated position, the snow often lying on the ground for several days together. When I asked whether they did not in consequence feel the severe fasting very much, they replied that this was the case, so that it even injured their health ; in some ancient histories (*παλαιὰ συγγράμμata*) they had read that the Egyptian monks used sometimes to eat hardly anything for weeks together, and they wished they could imitate them ; but

¹⁰ See Gass's 'Commentatio Historica,' p. 53.

there the climate was warm, and on Athos it was impossible to do so. They referred with some bitterness to the comparatively easy lives led by the monks in the larger convents. The church here has the unusual feature of a tower with a sloping roof, rising from the middle of the proaulion. They possess a curious cross, ornamented with ancient pearls, diamonds and emeralds.

From this place we descended to the path we had left, and after proceeding some way further along the lower slopes, once more climbed the mountain side to Caracalla, which occupies one of the finest positions on Athos, at the head of a gorge, with cultivated land, vineyards, and hazel groves about it, a wide expanse of sea below, and banks of woodland above, over which the great peak was visible. This place was the scene of Mr. Curzon's amusing story of the Abbot and the nuts, and we were forcibly reminded of it, for it was the nutting season, and all hands were busily engaged in gathering and storing them ; the floor of one passage, which led to the guest chamber, was covered with them several inches deep.¹¹ The hegumen, however, on this occasion was an agreeable and sensible man, and talked more refined Greek than most of the monks ; he had been a monk at Jerusalem, and had resided on Athos ten years. At dinner we were presented with the round Eucharistic cakes (*προσφορά*) which are used in the Greek Church, stamped in the centre with the words "Jesus Christ conquers" (*Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς νικᾷ*). When the monk who waited on us saw that we hesitated to eat them, not knowing whether they

¹¹ In default of a better explanation of the strange name of this monastery I would suggest that, like Caryes, it is derived from these nuts. Κάρυαι καλαί (the 'fine hazels') might, without much difficulty, be corrupted into Caracalla. The received story is that the convent was founded by one Antonius, the son of a Roman prince named Caracalla.

were intended for a common meal, he said, "Don't be afraid,—it's not sinful." We found that they are set before strangers because they are made of finer flour than what is commonly used in the monasteries. Our saltcellar and tumblers were curious specimens of old glass, and my tumbler in particular was engraved with most unmonastic Cupids. They may not improbably have come from Venice.

The road from Caracalla to the Lavra lies through the scenery which I have already described as the most beautiful in the peninsula. Its bowery glades were all the more delightful after the intense heat of the midday sun, which caused us to linger at the former monastery. As we also stopped to bathe about sunset, on a beach composed of pebbles of white marble, it was moonlight when we reached our destination, and the gates were closed; after knocking for a long time, and answering numerous questions which were put to us from within, to guard against the intrusion of objectionable visitors, we were at length admitted. The name Lavra, or Laura, signifies a street of cells, the early form of a monastery, and was given to this place as being the monastery *par excellence*, for it was once the largest on Athos, though it has somewhat declined of late years. It is situated at the south-east angle of the peninsula, and overlooks the sea at a height of some hundred feet, having a port below, guarded by a small fortress. It is the nearest point to the Island of Lemnos, which forms a conspicuous object, though at supper-time we discovered that the distance must be considerable, for the eggs of the monastery are brought from farms which they possess there (hens, as I have said, not being allowed on the Holy Mountain), and those which were set before us had taken so long on the passage that we were obliged to dismiss

them through the window, as soon as the monk who waited on us had left the room. During the night the neighbouring hill-sides frequently resounded with loud shouts and discharges of fire-arms, intended to drive away the numerous jackals (*τζακάλια*) which prey upon the vineyards.

We received great attention and kindness from the superiors of this society, but they seemed to care less about improvements or the introduction of learning than most that we had seen. One of them, called Melchizedeck, a man of vast proportions, and overflowing with fun and humour, was a well-known character on the Holy Mountain. “Have you seen that great, stout man, Melchizedeck of the Lavra?” was a question more than once put to us in other monasteries. The stories that were abroad in Salonica relative to some extremely rough-handed proceedings of his, certainly did not go to show that he was possessed of either a meek or a spiritual temperament, but whether or no the contrast which his burly frame and worldly ways presented to the ordinary monastic type had made an impression on his brethren, he certainly assumed something of the aspect of a hero in their eyes. The date of the foundation of the Lavra goes back to about the year 963, when a man of noble birth in Trebizond, who had been educated at Constantinople, and had subsequently devoted himself with great zeal to the monastic life, came to Athos, and set to work to establish it. He took the name of Athanasius, and though there is evidence of another regular monastery having existed on the Holy Mountain before this time, he found the monks and ascetics so scattered about throughout the peninsula, and in such a state of poverty, that he may virtually be regarded as the originator of the present conventional system. His great supporter in

this work was the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas, to whom he had made a prediction that he would repulse the Saracens ; and when that came to pass, the grateful commander (it was before he came to the throne) sent a large sum of money from the spoils of his victory towards the erection of the new monastery. The principal church is probably coeval with its foundation, for it shows signs of great antiquity. The cupola, which is unusually large, is decorated at the top with a figure of Christ in mosaic ; and in the eastern apse, behind the altar, is the bishop's seat in stone, flanked with stone benches for the presbyters, according to the arrangement which is found in a few very early churches in the west, such as San Clemente at Rome, and Torcello at Venice. We were also shown a very old mosaic, finely executed, representing St. John the Evangelist, contained in a frame of delicate filigree work in gold or silver gilt, in which are set miniatures of the founder of the monastery.

Some of the relics preserved in this monastery are magnificent works of art, and were it not for fear of wearying the reader I would willingly describe both these and many others which are found elsewhere. As it is, I shall mention only a few of them here and there, referring those who are interested in the subject to Mr. Curzon's book for more detailed information. But as an account of the mountain would be incomplete without some general remarks on this point, I will here add a few words about them. They are mainly composed of heads, limbs, and bones of saints, partially cased in silver, and pieces of the true cross, which are frequently surrounded by filigree and flower work in metal, of great antiquity and the most exquisite workmanship. The caskets in which these are kept are often superb specimens of the goldsmith's art, and ornamented with diamonds, extremely

rare from their antiquity, and pearls, rubies, and emeralds, of immense size, and for the most part uncut. As works of art, however, they are not appreciated by the monks, who value the relics themselves, and not their decorations. They are always kept behind the Iconostase, near the Holy Table, and are brought out and arranged on a kind of desk when they are to be shown to pilgrims and visitors. It was curious to observe the various degrees of respect with which they were treated in different monasteries. Generally the candles were lighted in their honour, and the priest who handled them put on his stole (*ἐπιτραχήλιον*) ; but in some places the caloyers treated them with the utmost veneration, keeping silence in their presence, and kissing them fervently ; in others they treated the exhibition more as a matter of course, and here and there they knew very little about them. Actual carelessness or irreverence we never saw ; the nearest approach to it was on the present occasion, at the Lavra, when Melchizedech, as we were looking at them, observed aside to our dragoman, "When I am dead, and they preserve my relics, it will cost the monastery a *precious* lot to case my head with silver !"

Early the next morning we sallied forth to visit a Retreat (*κάθισμα*), which lies on the hill-side a few hundred yards above the monastery. The life in these Retreats, and in the sketes, which are composed of associations of them, differs from that in the convents, in respect of the amount of manual labour which is performed in the former. In these reside most of the artisans, by whom the shops at Caryes, and through them the monasteries, are provided with clothing and other necessary articles. In consequence of their laborious occupations, their inmates are considered to live a very severe life, and I was certainly far more favourably impressed with

these societies than with the convents. The one towards which our steps were now directed is dedicated to "The Forerunner" (*ὁ ἄγιος πρόδρομος*), as St. John the Baptist is called. The building itself has nothing to distinguish it from an ordinary cottage, except that in one part the apse and dome of a small chapel peep out; on different sides of it rise superb cypresses, while the sloping hill-side below is covered with well-tended vineyards, which are cultivated by the monks themselves, and afford a proof of their careful husbandry. It was tenanted by four monks, one of whom was a priest, in consequence of which they were able to have all the services in their own chapel. Where this is not the case, the lay monks perform the ordinary services for themselves, and go for the Eucharistic service to some neighbouring monastery. They shewed us their cells, which were clean and well kept, and the workshop, where they make stockings and monks' caps, by which they get their livelihood. Very simple, gentle men they were, and appeared perfectly contented. They were surprised, but much pleased by our visit, and pressed us to partake of the same kind of refreshments as were brought to us on our arrival at a convent, but which we had not expected here. They were especially proud of their *light* water, the spring at the back of the retreat having been given to their predecessors by St. Athanasius, the founder of the Lavra. One old caloyer had come from "the city," *i.e.*, Constantinople,¹² at fifteen years of age, and had remained fifty

¹² The constant use of the term *ἡ πόλις* for Constantinople throughout the Ægean, just as, in England, London is called "town," confirms the derivation of Stamboul from *εἰς τὴν πόλιν*. There is, however, something to be said for the derivation from Constantinopolis, the first syllable having been lost (as in Salonica, from Thessalonica), and the rest compressed, as is constantly the case with names of places. *Stantinopol* would easily pass into *Stamboul*.

years on Athos, without once leaving it. They had a balcony, commanding a bird's-eye view of the monastery, together with its little harbour and tower below, and the wide blue sea beyond, with the islands of Lemnos, Imbros, and Samothrace. The monks delight in their views, though they rarely speak of them, and never criticise them : a fact which is worthy of the consideration of those who think that the ancient Greeks had no appreciation of natural scenery, because it is so little noticed in their writings. There was something very primitive and very prepossessing in the life of these men. If any one would see how near a resemblance to the life of the fourth century may be found in the nineteenth, I would ask him to compare this slight sketch with the elaborate and beautiful description of the Laura of Scetis, in Upper Egypt, in the first chapter of Mr. Kingsley's '*Hypatia*'.

Returning to the monastery, I stopped at a *kiosk*, or summer-house, outside the gateway, to talk to two monks and a secular, whom I found seated there. After the usual questions about the health of the Queen, the conversation turned on the Suez canal, which was in everybody's mouth at that time. Lord Palmerston's unreasonable opposition to this scheme appeared for the moment to have seriously damaged the prestige of England in the East, for the idea was just one of those which captivate the Oriental imagination, and it seemed an act of selfishness on the part of England to obstruct it. Consequently M. de Lesseps was everywhere a hero. This subject naturally led to the canal of Xerxes, of the history of which the secular was aware. He had also remarked, what I myself observed on a former occasion,—though, as far as I know, it has not been noticed in any book of travels,—that a similar, though narrower and

shallower, dike has been cut through the Isthmus of Pallene, the westernmost of the three peninsulas of Chalcidice. It runs across from sea to sea, and is now filled with sand, and two dry lagoons have been formed at its western end ; on account of its narrowness, it never could have been passable except for boats and small vessels. Its length is about half a mile, and it was probably the work of the Venetians at the time when they occupied Salonica, as a wall of Venetian construction runs along the slopes on the southern side of it, near the site of the ancient Cassandra or Potidæa.

One principal object which we had in view in visiting Athos at this time was to be present at the festival of the Transfiguration, which is celebrated on the summit of the peak, on the 6th of August (old style). Any monk from any of the monasteries is welcome to attend it, though it is quite a voluntary matter ; and we found that they regarded the mountain expedition not by any means as a member of the Alpine Club would have regarded it, but in the light of a pilgrimage. We had arranged our plans so as to arrive at the Lavra, which is the nearest monastery, two days before : the monks, however, we found, had already started to make their preparations. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the day after our arrival, that is, on the eve of the festival, we rode along the paths which skirt the sea-face of the great peak at some height above the sea, until we reached the Retreat of St. Demetrius, one of the few buildings which stand at the southern end of the peninsula, where the ground descends with great steepness to the sea. It contained 12 monks, engaged in different occupations, but working for a common stock. Going into one of the rooms, I found a painter sitting by a window, which opened out on a lovely gorge running down to the sea, and engaged in painting on a

thick block of wood a picture in exactly the same style as those from which the early Italian artists copied. He was a small, emaciated, delicate-looking man, with a pensive countenance, and quite realised my idea of a mediæval artist. He wore the Great Habit (*μέγα σχῆμα*), a kind of breastplate or stomacher of a woollen material, worked with a cross and other devices, which is the sign of the highest grade of monastic austerity. I afterwards discovered that he was a free Greek from Vostitz, on the Corinthian Gulf. He was so intent on his work that at first he hardly noticed me ; and I watched him for some time, as he worked on without a copy, and yet too rapidly and mechanically to allow me to suppose that he was painting from imagination. However, when I asked him some questions, and he saw that I was interested in his art, he put down his brush, and showed me the secret of his inspiration—the ‘Guide to Painting’ of Dionysius of Agrapha, which has been translated into French by M. Didron, under the title of ‘Manuel d’Iconographie Chrétienne,’ from a MS. which he obtained from Athos. This remarkable book, compiled at an unknown, but very early period, by a man who professed himself a diligent student of the works of Panselenus, contains the explanation of the singular uniformity of design in the paintings, both ancient and modern, of the Greek Church, as it is composed of rules, very often of a minute description, for the treatment of all kinds of sacred subjects, specifying the position and attitudes of the figures, the expression of the faces, and the backgrounds and accompaniments. The art of painting has existed uninterruptedly on Athos, and it has possessed, and still possesses, so many artists, that we may say with M. Didron, “c'est véritablement l'Italie de l'église orientale.” Sir Thomas Wyse tells us, in his ‘Excursion in the Pelopon-

nese,'¹³ that he found one of the churches in Laconia, at the time of his visit, being decorated by a painter from the Holy Mountain.

Having left our baggage-mule at the retreat, we ascended from thence through forests of beech and fir, by an extremely steep mule-track, commanding views of indescribable beauty, until about sunset we arrived at a Chapel of the Virgin, situated in the midst of grassy slopes on a rocky projection of the mountain, just where the trees begin to cease. From this point the two other peninsulas, which form the trident of Chalcidice, were visible, and to the south the line of small islands which run off from the north of Eubœa : far below us a steamer was making its way like a fly on the water. A few monks were here, preparing, in an immense stewpan, the viands for the next day,—a suspicious-looking mess of fish and vegetables, of which they gave us a dish for supper. After this repast we commenced the ascent on foot, accompanied by two monks, one of whom was a sportsman and carried his gun, a curious contrast to his monastic dress, and talked with evident satisfaction of the price which wild boars fetched, when killed and exported. Before long the other monk and our dragoman fell into the rear ; but our sporting friend was in training, and we soon found ourselves rapidly mounting by a rough zig-zag path, and scaling the white marble summits, which looked almost like snow-peaks in the light of the brilliant moon. After about an hour of this work, when we had almost reached the top, we sat down to wait for our companions, to listen to the tinkling bells of the mules in the distance, and to watch the moonbeams streaming on the water thousands of feet below us. Our sportsman whiled away the time by relating to us some of the

¹³ Vol i. p. 83.

legends of the mountain ; how, before the birth of Christ, a heathen image had existed on the summit ;¹⁴ and how St. Athanasius, the founder of the Lavra, had destroyed it ; and how, when he was building his monastery, the Devil, according to that legend so common throughout Christendom, had thrown down the stones by night which he had put together by day. As a great mountain has the power of attracting legends, let me add a few of those which at different times have gathered round this peak. Listen to Sir John Maundeville's account in the fourteenth century. "And there is another Hille, that is clept *Athos*, that is so highe, that the Schadewe of hym rechethe to Lampne¹⁵ (Lemnos), that is an Ile ; and it is 76 Myle betwene. And aboven at the cop of the Hille, is the Eir so clearer, that Men may fynde no Wynd there. And therefore may no Best lyve there ; and so is the Eyr drye. And Men seye in theise Contrees that Philosophres som tyme wenten upon theise Hilles, and helden to here Nose a Spoung moysted with Watre, for to have Eyr ; for the Eyr above was so drye. And aboven, in the Dust and in the Powder of tho Hilles, thei wroot Lettres and Figures with hire Fingres : and at the zeres ende thei comen azen, and founden the same Lettres and Figures, the whiche thei hadde writhen the zeer before, withouten ony defaute. And therfore it semethe wel, that theise Hilles passen the Clowndes and joynen to the pure Eyr."¹⁶ Another tradition is said to have related that it was on this mountain that Satan placed our Lord at the Temptation ; and here, in 1821, just before the Greek Revolution, a cross of light was

¹⁴ There seems to have been an altar to Zeus here, as on many "high places" in Greece. See 'Pomp. Mela.', ii. 2.

¹⁵ The story dates from classical times. See Pliny, iv. 12.

¹⁶ Maundeville's 'Travels,' p. 20.

seen by the monks, with the words "in this conquer."¹⁷ At present, however, there is no trace remaining of these legends.

The summit of the mountain rises to so sharp a point, that it only just leaves room for a small chapel, dedicated to the Transfiguration, on the north side of which the crags descend in tremendous precipices, while to the south is a narrow platform of rock, a few feet wide, from which again the cliffs fall rapidly away. As we approached from the east, we first heard the sound of chanting from within the chapel, and when we came round to the platform in front, a scene appeared which I shall never forget. Distinctly seen in the moonlight were the weird, ghostly figures of the monks, closely wrapped in their gowns, with long dark beards and unshorn locks, some sitting close to the window of the little chapel, where service was going on, some lying about in groups, like the figures of the three Apostles in Raphael's picture of the Transfiguration; and on going about to different points we could see them lying relieved against the white rocks, or dimly seen in the dark shadows,—themselves "a shadowy band." There were about sixty of them, besides a number of Russian pilgrims. We were not less an object of wonder to them than they were to us; they even forgot the usual salutations. "Where *do* you come from?" (*ἀπὸ ποῦ εἰσθε*) was all that they could say. We told them we were Englishmen, and that we came from the Lavra; on learning which they brought us to the wood fire they had lighted, and made some coffee for us. In connection with the fire, the classical reader will remember that this peak was one of the stations of the fire-beacons, which carried Aga-

¹⁷ Sir G. F. Bowen's 'Mount Athos, Thessaly, and Albania,' p. 52.

memnon's telegram to Clytemnestra. At intervals, as we sat there, the priest came out, arrayed in gorgeous vestments, and swung the incense about us ; until at last, as the vigil service lasted the whole night, I betook myself to a small cornice in the rock, where I slept, wrapt in my plaid, for a couple of hours ; after which I lay awake, gazing up into the bright heaven, and feeling the strange sensation of being elevated on such a rocky pinnacle, with nothing but sea and sky around. One could almost realise the feelings of Simeon Stylites.

At dawn the service ceased, and the monks kissed one another, and were sprinkled with holy water. When the sun rose, the shadow of the peak was projected over sea and land to the west in a distinctly marked pyramid ; but daylight added little to the view, as the greater part of the peninsulas of Athos and Sithonia had been visible during the night, and the distance was hazy. Eight of the monasteries, however, could be distinguished, and the expanse of sea was an extraordinary sight. On a clear day both Ida and Olympus may be seen. Half an hour after sunrise the Eucharistic service—the Liturgy, as it is called—commenced ; and at its conclusion a bunch of grapes was brought in and blessed, this being the first day on which they are allowed to be eaten. They then descended the mountain by the zigzag path in companies, singing psalms ; and after breakfasting on the grass by the chapel of the Virgin, we dispersed to our several destinations.

There is an interest attaching to this festival, independent of its strangeness, from its carrying us back to a theological discussion of the 14th century, which was the *ne plus ultra* of controversial folly. In the only passage in Gibbon's history in which the monks of Athos are

mentioned,¹⁸ the historian points one of his bitterest sneers by a reference to the dispute as to the divine light of Mount Tabor, which was the doctrine of the Hesychasts, who maintained that after long abstinence and contemplation they could see in the middle of their belly, which was the seat of the soul, the light which appeared to the disciples at the transfiguration of Christ, and that this light was part of the essence of God himself, and therefore immortal and eternal. This view, which Gibbon describes as the product of an empty stomach and an empty brain, was combated by a Calabrian monk called Barlaam, and thereupon a fierce discussion arose, which ended in the discomfiture and condemnation of the sceptic, and the establishment of the doctrine of the uncreated light of Tabor. I endeavoured to discover if any traces of this controversy were still remaining, but I could find none. No monk now expected to see this light in ecstatic moments; the name of Barlaam was almost unknown, and the controversy forgotten: and though they still maintained that the light of the Transfiguration was an uncreated light, they did not anathematize those who held the contrary. Indeed, not only on this, but on most points connected with religion, I was forcibly struck by their breadth of view, which made itself seen in the midst of much formalism and superstition, and by their tolerance of others' opinions, and charitable feelings towards other Christian communions.¹⁹

Owing to the exposed position and southern aspect of this peak, the flowers were almost all past at this season

¹⁸ Smith's 'Gibbon,' vii. 404. Compare Mosheim, ii. 660.

¹⁹ On this, as a characteristic of Eastern Christendom, *see* Stanley's 'Eastern Church,' p. 57.

of the year, notwithstanding its great elevation. At the time of my former visit, however, which happened early in June, 1853, I found a considerable number, and it may be worth while to mention some of those which occur in the upper parts. Above the region of trees were *Viola tricolor*, *Saxifraga media*, *Saxifraga aizoon*, *Vesicaria utriculata*; and in 1861 I found *Saxifraga porophylla* and *Centaurea aurca*. Within the region of trees were first *Asphodelus luteus* and *Epipactis grandiflora*; and somewhat lower down *McLittis, melissophyllum*, *Epipactis rubra*, and *Atropa belladonna*.

CHAPTER V.

MOUNT ATHOS (*continued*).

Descent to the Skete of St. Anne—St. Paul's—A Monastic meal—St. Dionysius—St. Gregory's—Simopetra—Russians and Greeks—Xeropotamu—Ancient diamonds—Xenophu—Docheiareciu—A Hermit—Constamonitu—Monastic group—Zographu—Chilandari—The Monks' views of other Churches.

WE now descended on the side of the mountain opposite to the Lavra, and entered on the first of a succession of dreadful roads, which run along the precipices of the south-west part of the peninsula, the like of which I have never seen in any country. These are sometimes cut or worn in the rocks, which overlook the sea at a height of several hundred feet; and sometimes, as in this first part of the descent, are formed of a series of steps, to which the sagacious mules of the mountain are accustomed, but which would be almost impassable to any other beasts of burden. These pathways are said to have been made by a former bishop, who resided on Athos, and is looked back to as a great benefactor; they are of the same kind as those commonly found in the mountainous parts of Turkey, the stone steps being intended to support the ground, and prevent the soil from falling away; indeed, in the winter, when the torrents come down from the heights, if it were not for these, the means of communication would be entirely destroyed; but in summer, from the hardness of the limestone of which they are composed, they become as slippery as glass, and greatly increase the difficulty of

travelling. At the bottom of the first long descent, following a narrow cornice in the rock, we reached the skete of St. Anne, which stands in a most precipitous position, and still at a great elevation above the sea; near its site is said to have been the place called Nymphæum in classical times; and if Virgil's description of such a spot--

“In front, retiring from the wave,⁷
Opes on the view a rock-hung cave,
A home that nymphs might call their own,
Fresh springs, and seats of living stone”—

may guide us in our search for it, it would seem to correspond very charmingly. The dwellings of the monks are grouped round a central church, and niched picturesquely in the terraced cliffs. Amongst its 120 members it numbers many of the best artificers on Athos, including painters, calligraphers (who, however, are merely copiers of liturgies and other manuscripts), and singers (*ψάλται*), who go about to different monasteries for the great festivals. But the particular branch of the fine arts, of which this is the principal home, and for which the monks of Athos have been celebrated from time immemorial, is wood carving. This is employed both for the decoration of the churches, and for the manufacture of crosses and other mementos, which are bought by pilgrims, and are frequently of extreme delicacy and almost Chinese minuteness. A colony of carvers has existed at this skete for many centuries. They are mentioned by Archbishop Georgirenes in the 17th century, and had probably been there long before his time. The most famous, however, of all the artificers of the present day is a monk of the neighbouring

monastery of St. Paul, called Cosmas, who, when we saw him, was engaged on a very large and elaborate piece of work, which he was intending to send to the Great Exhibition of 1862.

We reached St. Paul's early in the afternoon. It stands on one side of a wide and deep gully, which runs down to the sea from the base of the great peak, and is inhabited mainly by Greeks from the Ionian islands (*éπτανήσιοι*), who consequently at that time were British subjects. They entertained us in first-rate style, and two fowls (cocks, of course), which were reserved for distinguished visitors, were slaughtered in our honour; but we could not avoid the uncomfortable feeling that we were treated rather as the patrons of "rayahs;" and it seemed to be an object with them to get us to say a word for them to the Consul at Salonica about a farm on the peninsula of Sithonia, concerning which they had a dispute with the monastery of St. Dionysius. Litigation is now, as it always has been, the bane of these societies. Another point in their life, which I may notice here, is the wonderfully intimate knowledge the monks have of what is going on in other monasteries. They seem to visit one another very little, though, when they do so, they are received in a very friendly and fraternal manner; but, notwithstanding this, if any hegumen left his monastery, or any other trivial occurrence happened in any other society, they appeared at once to get wind of it. There must be a vast amount of gossip on Athos.

As this was a festival day we had an opportunity of being present at a monastic meal. There is generally a little difficulty in persuading the monks to admit you to their public meals, as they consider it a greater honour that you should be entertained alone, or with some of the

dignitaries, and thus they are able to set before you somewhat better fare than is allowed at the common table. On this occasion we asked permission, as a special favour, and no objection was made. When dinner was ready, one of the superiors, in the absence of the hegumen, came to escort us to the refectory,—a room having the proportions of a college hall, but with a flat roof, and entered by a doorway in the middle of one side, opposite to which there runs off a semicircular alcove. Two rows of pillars run down the hall, thus dividing it into a nave and aisles : the nave was left open, while the aisles were occupied by oblong tables, placed across between the wall and the pillars, each accommodating eight persons. At the upper end of the nave was the high table, a semicircular marble slab, at which we were seated with three of the principal monks : the rest of the dark-robed company sat at the other tables, and at the bottom of the hall were some Russian pilgrims, who had come for the festival. Besides a piece of bread and a tankard of light red wine, two small dishes of fish and a pear were set before each of us. During dinner one of the monks read a homily on the Transfiguration from a lectern placed near our table : there was a pulpit attached to the wall near the centre of the building, intended for this purpose, but it did not seem to be used. Talking, of course, was interdicted. At the conclusion of the meal the reader prostrated himself before the Superior, and received from him a piece of bread, in token that he was allowed to have his dinner : after this all rose, and turned to the East, while the Superior said grace, and then we filed out of the hall. As we passed through the doorway, the two cooks and the reader prostrated themselves on the steps, and remained in that position until all the

brethren had gone by, to signify that they asked pardon for any shortcomings in the entertainment.

The saint from whom this monastery takes its name is not the Apostle of the Gentiles, but a monk who was its founder in the fourteenth century. Among the relics is kept an iron cross, which he used to wear suspended from his neck. There is also a large silver cross, set with jewels, which I have not seen mentioned elsewhere; it stands about 3 feet high, and has exquisite miniature pictures in enamel inlaid in it, the heads of the saints being encircled with tiny pearls. It is a superb work of art, and is said by the monks to have been the gift of the Emperor Constantine Romanus, though what emperor they meant I cannot tell. The principal church is of recent erection, and differs from the usual type in having no wall of separation between the body of the church and the narthex. The division is made by a curtain instead, the effect of which is not very good; the use of it, however, is ancient, for similar ones are represented in the mosaics of S. Apollinare di dentro at Ravenna. Another consequence of this arrangement is that other pillars are introduced besides the four that support the central cupola. This assimilates the building more to the western type, but it greatly destroys the unity and proportion, in which the impressiveness of a Byzantine interior consists.

The precipices which intervene between this monastery and that of St. Dionysius are so tremendous, and the paths so bad, that the monks do not like their mules to go that way. Accordingly we were provided with a boat and two naval caloyers (*ναυτικοὶ καλόγεροι*), who rowed us round, and landed us under the latter convent, which stands on a steep rock that projects over the sea from the mountain-side. Owing to its position, it is much

confined for room, and only contains sixty monks, though it holds a high rank among the other convents. The buildings, though closely packed together, are among the handsomest on Athos, especially the church, the refectory, and a corridor with pillars in front of that structure, all of which are covered with frescoes and gilding. A young monk, who had been a pupil of an older member of the same society, was restoring some of these paintings. The illuminated MSS. also, and the relics which are kept in the church, are singularly fine. The casket in which one of these, the arm of St. Nephon, is kept, is one of the most curious remains of ancient art. It is thus very accurately described by Mr. Curzon :— “This shrine was the gift of Neagulus, Waywode or Hospodar of Wallachia. It is about 2 feet long and 2 feet high, and is in the shape of a Byzantine church ; the material is silver gilt, but the admirable and singular style of the workmanship gives it a value far surpassing its intrinsic worth. The roof is covered with five domes of gold ; on each side it has sixteen recesses, in which are portraits of the saints in niello, and at each end there are eight others. All the windows are enriched in open-work tracery, of a strange sort of Gothic pattern, unlike anything in Europe. It is altogether a wonderful and precious monument of ancient art, the production of an almost unknown country, rich, quaint, and original in its design and execution, and is indeed one of the most curious objects on Mount Athos.”¹ Several other works of art, which Mr. Curzon describes, are now no longer shown, and some of them the monks refuse to acknowledge that they possess, saying that they have been carried off by the Turks, or making some other excuse : but

¹ ‘Monasteries of the Levant,’ p. 382.

on both occasions that I have visited this convent I have found its inmates singularly suspicious, and unwilling to show their treasures. The library, in which the MSS. are kept, is over the church porch: while we were there I had a long conversation on theological subjects with the librarian, who was the best-informed person we had met with on Athos, while other pale fathers sat round, stern and grim, looking like the impersonifications of controversial theology. We talked of the light of Tabor, the differences of the Greek and Anglican churches, and many other points; and I found him quite up to the subjects under discussion, and quick in his way of putting his arguments. Amongst other things, he asked why our priests shaved, not suspecting how soon the Anglican clergy might be converted to the practice of the Orthodox. This, however, he allowed to be an unimportant point, though such has not always been the case, as is shown by the remark of Sir John Maundeville:—"Also thei saye that wee synne dedly in schavyng our berdes."²

Returning to our boat, we coasted along to St. Gregory's, a monastery of 100 monks, mostly from free Greece, which lies under the rocks close to the sea. It is the poorest of all, and as it has been rebuilt within the last hundred years there is nothing to see. So, after a long talk with the hegumen, an earnest and intelligent man, who had been a merchant in his early life, and afterwards was a monk at St. Paul's, we re-embarked and rowed in the direction of Simopetra, or the rock of Simon, the anchorite, the most remarkable in its situation of all the monasteries, which is conspicuous from a long distance off on this side of the mountain. We landed at a

² Maundeville's 'Travels,' p. 24.

tiny port, provided with a pier and landing-place, above which the monastery towers, perched on a rock, at a height of 800 feet. Shortly after our arrival a monk appeared, and finding that we wanted our saddle-bags carried up, took out a large speaking-trumpet and shouted through it to the monastery in Greek, "two mules" ($\delta\acute{\nu}\sigma\mu\lambda\acute{a}p\tau\alpha$). He was answered from above, and not long after, as we sauntered up the zigzag path, we met the animals on their way down. Just below the monastery the ground is carefully made into terraces, where vegetables are grown, while vines and gourds trail over the high supporting walls. From these rises the perpendicular rock on which the building stands, isolated on all sides from the surrounding ground, except at the back, where it is joined to the cliffs by an aqueduct with two rows of arches. The upper part of its high walls is lined with wooden balconies and corridors, which are supported on projecting brackets, and rise, tier above tier, to the roof, with the most picturesque irregularity. Inside, the buildings are most curiously packed away. In the lower part are the storehouses, between the side walls and the upper part of the rock which crops out in the interior court; the court itself is so narrow that the whole building has been roofed over, the light penetrating by side windows and a variety of openings and crevices. In consequence of this the church is not isolated, as in most of the monasteries, but closely surrounded by the other buildings, and its walls are pierced with numerous windows for a Byzantine edifice, in order to admit more light into the interior. The view from it is magnificent, comprising a wide expanse of sea, with the opposite coast of Sithonia, and towards the south the steep cliffs of the peninsula and the peak of Athos. It was a superb sight at nightfall to see the vaporous clouds gather like a

glory on the summit, and creep down or circulate round it, while the moon rose and poured her golden light over the whole scene.

Amongst the inmates of this convent there was an old Russian monk, who was evidently the butt of the others. Poor old fellow! five-and-twenty years he had been in the monastery, and yet he could hardly speak a word of Greek. "Two, three words I know," he said; "wine, bread—no more." His principal companion was a clever tom-cat, which he had trained to turn most wonderful somersaults, and which was brought out into the court of the monastery to perform before us. "Ah!" exclaimed a sharp-witted young Zantiote, who was standing by, with a look of compassion, "the Russians are thick-skulled" (*οἱ Ρῶσσοι εἶναι χοιδροκέφαλοι*). Besides this Zantiote there was another very clever young monk—the same, whom I have mentioned as finding difficulties in Thucydides, who for inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge was a thorough Greek, and a striking contrast to the Russian. He knew all about the Greek authors and their dialects, and his acquaintance with ancient Greek history was as minute as if he had just been preparing it for an examination. Again, he was perfectly familiar with modern European geography, and understood the position of second-rate towns, such as Strasburg and Buda. He asked numerous questions about the "English Episcopal Protestant" (*διαμαρτυρουμένη*) Church, and when he discovered my companion was in the militia he asked for information about the English army, the different branches of the service, the sub-divisions of the regiments, the officers, and a variety of other points. Seeing that he had an evident taste for secular subjects, I was curious to discover whether a grain of scepticism had entered his mind with regard to the system of beliefs by

which he was surrounded, and accordingly I put one or two leading questions to test this; but nothing of the kind was traceable. He spoke of the miraculous legends with the same simple faith as the others, and on any point of doctrine referred at once to the Councils as being of unquestionable authority.

The next morning a three hours' ride over the mountains, in the midst of scattered shrubs, with views of the sea far below, brought us to the monastery of Xeropotamu, or "The Torrent," which is so called from the ravine and river-bed which lies directly beneath it. The Superior, by whom we were entertained during the few hours we spent there, had been a grocer at Corfu, and though he talked of the delights of tranquillity, yet the fidgetty restlessness of his manner suggested the idea that he would have been much happier behind the counter. In his company we visited the church, which is truly magnificent, perhaps the finest on Athos, and contains two very remarkable relics. One of these is a fragment of the true cross, and consists of one long piece of dark wood, and two cross pieces, one above the other, the upper one, which is the shorter of the two, being intended for the superscription. Though not exactly a crucifix, it has a small figure of our Lord on the middle of it, in ivory or bone; from the great abhorrence in which anything approaching an image is held in the Greek Church, even this would probably not have been spared, had it not been a reputed present from the Empress Pulcheria. Near the foot is a representation in gold plate of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and under it, in ancient Greek characters, the inscription, *Kονσταντίνου Εὐφροσύνης καὶ τῶν τέκνων*; but what is most remarkable about it is the wonderful size of the uncut diamonds and emeralds with which it is set. This is, in all

probability, the same piece of the true cross which is mentioned in a golden bull of the Emperor Romanus Lecapenus (A.D. 924) as having been taken from the Queen's treasury, and presented by him to this monastery after his recovery from a severe illness, on which occasion it was conducted thither with great pomp and ceremonial.³ The Euphrosyne mentioned in the inscription is probably the daughter of Constantine VI., who was married to the Emperor Michael the Stammerer (A.D. 820). In the monastery of Sphigmenu there is another cross, inferior in other respects, but not less valuable for its ancient diamonds, and the two together form a pair which it would be difficult to match elsewhere. It has lately been pointed out that the great rarity of large diamonds in ancient works of art, even in Byzantine times, when we should have expected that the gorgeousness of the Court, and the communication with Asia, would have introduced them, is to be accounted for, not by the scarcity of the gem itself at that period, but by the prohibition which was imposed by the Indian sovereigns against the exportation from that country of any above a certain size.⁴ The other relic is noteworthy for the curious superstition attached to it. It is a cup, which is said also to have belonged to the empress Pulcheria, covered on the outside with old red gold ; inside there is very curious and beautiful carving, representing figures, done in bone, or, according to the legend, in the horn of a serpent. This had the power of curing a person who had been poisoned, if wine or water were administered in it to the patient ; it is still used by the monks for the same purpose, and they say that if liquid remains in it for any length of time it will boil. The same idea is

³ Gass, p. 7.

⁴ King, on the 'Natural History of Precious Stones,' p. 21, note ⁴.

found to exist elsewhere. Thus, Mr. Hamilton, in his ‘Researches in Asia Minor,’ speaking of an Armenian physician whom he met in that country, says: “His medical skill was proved by producing what he called a snake’s horn, which he asserted was an infallible antidote against poison. ‘If,’ said he, ‘a small quantity be scraped off with a piece of gold, and swallowed in a little water by one who has been either poisoned or stung, he will be immediately cured.’ It appeared to me to resemble a boar’s tusk, and may have been a piece of simple harts-horn ; its chief efficacy being in the piece of gold—supplied, of course, by the patient.”⁵ A similar superstition to this in the west of Europe was attached to the tusk of the narwhal, which passed for the unicorn’s horn, and was reputed to possess the virtue of neutralizing and even detecting the presence of poison. Edward IV. gave to the ambassador of Charles of Burgundy a cup of gold, garnished with pearls and a great sapphire ; and the chronicler adds, “in the myddes of the cuppe ys a grete pece of an Vnicornes horne.”⁶

To the north of Xeropotamu the declivities of the western coast become more gentle, and the scenery softer and more wooded. We continued our journey in the evening, and passing the Russian monastery on our left, arrived at that of Xenophu, which lies on the sea-shore. From this place, notwithstanding its low situation, the magnificent summits of the Thessalian Olympus were visible at sunset over the northern part of Sithonia. For our supper, amongst other things, the monks brought us a dish of rice and *heptapodi*, a kind of sea polypus, which is allowed to be eaten on fast days because it is supposed to be bloodless. The object of most interest

⁵ Hamilton’s ‘Asia Minor,’ ii. p. 127.

⁶ See ‘Our English Home,’ p. 61.

which they had to show was the new iconostase which they have erected in their church ; it is composed partly of Tenian and partly of Athoan marble, and is certainly very imposing.⁷

It is less than half an hour's ride along the coast from this place to Docheiareiu, or "The Steward's Monastery," so called because it is said to have been founded by a monk named Euthymius, who was at one time steward or bursar of the Lavra. This and Xeropotamu are the only two Idiorrhythmic convents on this side of Athos, the ruggedness of the ground being apparently favourable to the retention of the older system. The buildings here are very grand, and the works of art, which seem to have escaped Mr. Curzon, are singularly fine. There are two splendid crosses ; one a single cross, magnificently set in gilt filigree work adorned with gems, the spaces between the limbs being also filled up with the same kind of ornamentation, so that it assumes, roughly speaking, a diamond shape ; the other is a double cross, like that at Xeropotamu, and has beautiful metal flower-work wreathed all about it. In the library, too, is the finest illuminated MS. that I saw on Athos. It is a book of

⁷ Attached to this altar-screen was a copy of verses, which I append, in illustration of the *cultus* of the Virgin in the Greek Church. It is written in ancient Greek, and composed in the modern accentual rhythm, rhymed :—

“ ἐγώ δέ σε, πανάχραντε, ὡς πάντα δυναμένην,
δμολογῶ μητέρα σε Θεοῦ δεδοξασμένην.
κηρύττω σου τὸ ἔλεος καὶ τὴν ἐνεργεσίαν,
τὴν εἰς ἐμέ σου ἄμαχον, δέσποινα, προστασίαν.
ἡ χάρις τοῦ ἐλέος σου ἀεί με σκεπασάτω,
ἐξ ἀοράτων με ἔχθρῶν καὶ ὄρατῶν σωσάτω.”

It must, however, be remembered that the worship of the Virgin has not been hardened into dogma in the Eastern, as it has in the Western Church ; nor has it overshadowed the worship of our Lord, as one cannot help feeling to be the case in the Church of Rome.

Lives of Saints of the 11th century, decorated with miniatures of the saints, most delicately executed, and initial letters bordered with exquisite arabesques. The manuscripts here were bound in modern binding, and had been looked after by the master of the school at Caryes.

Shortly after leaving this monastery I was fortunate enough to have an interview with a hermit. In one place, where the path lies along the beach, we had stopped for my companion to gather some pebbles, when our dragoman, looking up the steep cliffs, exclaimed that he saw a man standing at some distance above us. Guessing what he might be, I dismounted, and scrambled up 20 or 30 feet to the mouth of a cave, where I found a dark hollow-cheeked man, clothed in a single garment of rough cloth. In the inner part of the cave, which was divided off from the rest by a low wall, was his bed of straw, and one book of prayers was lying on the wall. In this place he lived both winter and summer. He came originally from Argyro-Castro, in Albania, and had served for some years as a corporal in the army of the King of Greece; but after a time he was seized with a desire for the life of retirement, and came as a caloyer to the skete of St. Anne. After remaining there for three years, he devoted himself to the life of a hermit, in which he had passed his time for seven years. His food was brought to him from the neighbouring monasteries. He spoke distinctly, like a man who had had some education; and slowly, as one unaccustomed to conversation. As we were looking down on the tumbling waves, I said to him before leaving, "Here you have near you God and the sea." "Ah!" he replied, "we are all sinners," as if to deprecate the idea that he was on a higher spiritual level than other men. His answer illustrates the entire absence of pretension

which we observed amongst the monks: they never represented themselves as more learned, or more religious, or having higher aims, than was really the case; and when they had devoted themselves to the monastic life from mixed motives, they did not hesitate to avow it.

A wooded gorge that runs inland near this point led us to the small and secluded monastery of Constamonitu, one of the very few which do not command a sea view. On our arrival we were ushered into the guest chamber, a small gloomy room, where we were soon after visited by the hegumen—a kind, hearty old man, and very simple in his ideas, having been very little away from Athos; yet we soon discovered that he knew everything of what was going on in Europe and America; he was even aware that in England we use steam machinery in agriculture; and a smile of grim satisfaction played over his features as he spoke of the probable downfall of the Papacy.⁸ While we were talking with him, there came in a very old man, so venerable in his appearance,

⁸ At Cutlumusi and other monasteries there is a curious tradition that they were destroyed by the Pope of Rome, who came here “about the time of the great schism.” The foundation for this was probably some attack of the Crusaders at the time of the Fourth Crusade; or the expedition of the Emperor Michael Palaeologus to force the monks to accept the terms of the Concordat of Lyons, on which occasion they suffered great injury at his hands. The name Caryes, which, as I have before mentioned, means “The Hazels,” is derived by many of the monks from κάρπα (a head), in accordance with a story that the Pope cut off the heads of all the representatives of that period, and placed them round the Protaton, or principal church of the place. Some authorities maintain the derivation from κέρα, though on different grounds from those given by the monks. According to them the earlier form of the name was Καρέαι, or Καραί, and consequently they consider it to mean “head centre” (Gass, p. 19). But the name Caryes, as “The Hazels,” is so frequently found, and the custom of calling places from the trees found there is so common, especially in Greece, that there can be little doubt that this derivation is the right one.

that the most thoughtless person could not but have risen up in his presence. His flowing beard was snowy white, his limbs spare and ascetic, so that he looked more like one of the ancient hermits than anything else that we saw. Just such a figure Spenser has described in his portrait of heavenly contemplation :

“ — that godly aged sire,
With snowy lockes adowne his shoulders shed ;
As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
The mossy braunches of an oke halfe ded.
Each bone might through his body well be red,
And every sinew seene, through his long fast :
For naught he cared his carcas long unfed ;
His mind was full of spirituall repast,
And pyn'd his flesh to keep his body low and chast.”—
Faerie Queene, i. x. 48.

He was born in Mitylene, and was employed in a merchant's business in Egypt at the time of Napoleon's expedition : after this he retired to the convent of Mount Sinai, and, when he had spent three years there, came in 1809 to Athos, where he had remained ever since. He had been tutor to the old Hegumen, with whom he had maintained a warm and unbroken friendship. The man, who waited on us, was a tall, gaunt caloyer, with a hard Scotch cast of features, who might have sat for a likeness of a Covenanter. He talked with fervour of the protection afforded to them by the sacred relics, of the devoted lives of some of the hermits, their prophetic power, and the need of sternly subjugating the passions, in order to gain an insight into the higher spiritual mysteries, until at last he looked almost like one inspired ; and his utterance became so indistinct, that we could understand but little of what he said. The sight of these three men together in the dark monastic chamber was one not to be forgotten ; and it is a characteristic

instance of the hospitality of the Holy Mountain that, though they were sternly fasting, they pressed us to feast on the best of what they had, and the Covenanter replenished our wine-glasses.

On leaving this place, we crossed a range of hills, and descended into another rich valley, where in the midst of numerous cypresses stands Zographu, or "The Painter's"—a monastery of 100 monks, all Bulgarians, who have the service in the old Slavonic tongue. The legend which is given to explain the name relates that a picture of St. George, now in the monastery, which was painted by himself, having originally existed in Palestine, transported itself to Athos by its own wonder-working power. But when we consider that it is a Slavonic monastery, there is a strong probability that the Greek name is the corruption of an original Bulgarian one; and this may very well have been Zagora ("behind the mountain"), which we find in many parts of Turkey. This would accurately describe its retired position. It is a handsome structure, and part of it has been lately rebuilt in consequence of the destruction caused by an earthquake, but it does not contain much that is worth seeing. A school, which was established here some time ago, has died a natural death, and the Hegumen spoke despondingly of the prospect of introducing study, which he feared was not reconcilable with monastic pursuits. He was the only one of the inmates that we met with who could speak Greek. The Greek monks in the other convents betrayed the spirit of their ancestors in an amusing manner, by always speaking of the Slavonic caloyers as "barbarians."

We passed the night at Zographu, and continued our route the next morning across the peninsula, through country different from that of any other part of Athos—

upland valleys and forest scenery, in the midst of which the light green foliage of the Isthmian pine was conspicuous, the same of which the crown was composed at the games of the Isthmus. At last we caught sight of the blue Strymonic gulf, and descended to Chilandari, the second of the two Bulgarian monasteries, which contains also a number of Servians. It stands between wooded hills at the head of a narrow valley, and in consequence of its position is somewhat unhealthy. In the church is kept the staff of Andronicus Comnenus, who retired hither at the end of his life, and also a MS. the most precious of all that exist on Athos, which was the gift of that emperor, and is in perfect preservation, from having been kept with the sacred relics. It is a 4to Greek MS. of St. John's Gospel, of about the 12th century, written in gold letters on white vellum : there are very few manuscripts like it in existence.

On both our visits to this monastery I was struck with the intelligence shown by the leading monks. On the first occasion I was much impressed by a father called Hilarion, and on enquiring for him subsequently, I found that he had been promoted to a high office in Bulgaria, and having taken the national side in the Bulgarian movement against the Patriarch of Constantinople, had afterwards been deprived. This time I had a long conversation with one of the superiors, called Nilus, a man of imposing appearance, whose strong countenance, quick eye, long grey hair, and benevolent expression, were eminently attractive ; and he was liberal-minded as well as devout. Speaking to me of other churches, he said, "The Church is now divided, but all are Christians, and our first object ought to be to make it one again. The proper way to bring this about is to ignore minor differences as far as possible, and to leave each Church

free to maintain its established customs. If I were to visit England, I ought to be free to worship according to the rites to which I am accustomed ; if a member of the English Church comes here, he should have the same freedom." He thought there was hope of bringing this about, especially in case of the downfall of the Papacy, which he regarded as the great difficulty in the way of the unity of the Church. A book of travels is not the proper place for discussing theories of Christian union or comprehension, but I believe Nilus struck the right nail on the head. All honour to those who, in whatsoever way, endeavour to promote harmony among Christian communions ; but when we consider the vast differences which almost necessarily exist between them, arising in great measure from temperament, from modes of thought, and from deeply-rooted associations, it is hard to conceive that a permanent basis of agreement could be fixed on any other principle than that just stated. No doubt, in such a case, some common standard of doctrine would be required, which should be accepted by all ; but such a one we have ready to hand in the one only form of faith which has been established and ratified by the whole Christian Church—the Nicene creed.

When we talked to the monks, as we often did, about their relation to other Christian churches, and to our own in particular, the answers they gave us were almost always sympathetic and liberal. "Do you receive the Gospels ? Do you believe in the Trinity ? Are you baptized ?" asked one. "Very well ; then you are a true Christian." Another volunteered the remark that all the Churches are one, the test being belief in Christ. "The Ottomans," he said, "have also a Church, but them we cannot include, because they do not believe in

Christ." These expressions, however, we must not take for more than what they really mean. When I was discussing the subject with the librarian of St. Dionysius', who was a rigid disciplinarian, and seized the points of difference in preference to those of agreement, I asked him at last the plain question, "Do you then consider us to be heretics?" "No," he replied, "you are not heretics, but you are not of the Orthodox Church." This exactly represents the point of view from which we are generally regarded by members of the Eastern communion; and the same thing is taught in their catechisms, namely, that the universal Church is the aggregate of all the bodies of Christians which are found throughout the world, but that to belong to one of these is a very different thing from membership in the Church to which they have the privilege of belonging. In short, they regard us almost exactly in the same way as a large number of English Churchmen regard the dissenters in their own country—that is to say, they acknowledge the reality of our Christian faith, and its vitality, as shown by the fruits it produces, and would shrink from denying that we shall ultimately be saved; but at the same time they feel themselves unable to consider us as being in the same safe and, so to speak, guaranteed position as themselves. It will be seen, however, that there are some, like Nilus, who take a wider view.

CHAPTER VI.

MOUNT ATHOS (*continued*).

Canal of Xerxes — Spighmenu — The Central Ridge — The Russian Monastery — Estimate of the Monastic System — The future of the Holy Mountain — History of the Community — Earliest Period — Time of the Comneni — Attack by the Latins — Time of the Palæologi — Canta-cuzene — Theological Movements — Submission to the Turks — Later History.

WE have now reached the last of the monasteries at this end of the peninsula ; but before we turn our faces once more in the other direction, a few words ought to be said about the canal and its environs, which we investigated when returning from Athos to Salonica by land in 1853. The isthmus through which it was cut is just a mile and a half in width, and the ground immediately about it is low, so that even in the middle, where there are some slight undulations, it hardly rises more than fifty feet above the sea. Thus the description of Herodotus is very accurate, as he speaks of it as “a neck of land about twelve furlongs across, the whole extent whereof, from the sea of the Acanthians to that over against Torone, is a level plain, broken only by a few low hills.”¹ Through this isthmus the canal of Xerxes was cut, and the deep dyke which still remains, and forms the boundary of the Holy Mountain, is now called by the inhabitants *Provlaka*, which name is evidently the corruption of a word ($\pi\rho\alpha\hat{\nu}\lambda\alpha\xi$) signifying “the canal in

¹ Herod. vii. 22.

front of the peninsula of Athos." Thus the doubts of Juvenal and other writers, both ancient and modern, as to the execution of Xerxes' project, are proved to have been groundless. In the middle, it is true, it is not traceable for some distance ; but it has been suggested, with great probability, that this part was afterwards filled up in order to allow a more ready passage into and out of the peninsula. The canal is best traceable on the southern side, where it is deep and continuous, varying in breadth from time to time from the soil having accumulated in places, and marshy at intervals, even in summer ; in the wet season a considerable stream of water is said to flow down through it. Near the point where it reaches the sea on this side stood the ancient town of Sane. The whole place was carefully surveyed for the Admiralty by Captain Spratt. I may here mention, also, that when approaching from this direction the neighbouring village of Erisso (Acanthus), which lies on the other side of some low hills to the north-west, I passed a large and high mound, which at first I took for the acropolis, until the real acropolis came in view, with remains of Hellenic walls on one of its sides. I have little doubt that this was the tomb of Artachæes, who superintended the cutting of the canal, for Herodotus speaks of his having been buried at Acanthus, and of a mound having been raised over his grave by the whole Persian army.²

The next monastery to Chilandari is Sphigmenu ($\tauού\epsilonσφιγμένου$), which derives its name from its *confined* position between wooded heights, which here approach one another in the recesses of a little bay. We were much interested in this place, because at the time of our

² Herod. vii. 117.

former visit a large part of the front had been washed down by the encroaches of the sea, and the hegumen expressed great anxiety about obtaining funds to restore it. During the interval he had visited Russia and other countries, where he had collected the requisite sums, and the new building had been finished about a year, and presented a substantial and handsome appearance. The hegumen himself, too, had grown stout and hearty in the process ; he was much pleased with the contribution which we tendered to him, having been unable to find any channel of communication with him while we were in England. Anthimus, the ex-patriarch of Constantinople, was residing in the monastery at this time : after his deposition he had come here of his own accord.

It took us five hours to ride from Sphigmenu to Caryes, by a path along the central ridge, descending occasionally on one side or the other, and frequently overlooking precipitous banks of wood, which shelved downwards from our feet. At one point the humble and homely Constamonitu appeared, nestling in its narrow valley ; in the opposite direction the lordly buildings of Vatopedi were conspicuous on the shore. In many places the peak was visible, and the wide sea of course lay below us on both sides ; but the prettiest effects were produced by the vignette views, seen through the depressions, where now and then two or three peeps of the blue water opened out at once on different sides. It is one of the finest rides in the peninsula. In one place a large eagle rose just below us, and soared away. On reaching the village we had a parting interview with the "First Man," and, after revisiting our friends at Cutlumusi, mounted again to the ridge by a steep track through dense forests, and then descended to Russico, or the Russian monastery, on the western coast, where

we arrived just before the gates were closed for the night.

In this society there are 300 monks,—Greeks, Russians, Servians, and Bulgarians,—and it has the name of being a very strict and well-ordered body, notwithstanding the various elements of which it is composed. The Greeks predominate in numbers, and the hegumen is of this race, but many of the features of the place are Russian, such as whitewash, green cupolas, chiming bells, and tea. This is the only convent where the service is performed in two languages. In the others, if any members of other nationalities come to reside, they have to conform to the worship of the majority—a thing which is not very edifying to them, as they can understand but little: here, however, there are two principal churches, one for the Greek and the other for the Slavonic service. The Russian church has very few Byzantine features about it; the architecture and pictures are Italian; it was consequently uninteresting enough, but the harmonious and musical sound of their chanting, and the chiming of the bells for Vespers, was highly agreeable. On great festivals the bells are sounded, as they are ordinarily in Russia, during the recital of the Nicene Creed; a custom which has been noticed as illustrating the prominence which Eastern Christianity has always given to doctrinal orthodoxy. Amongst the Greeks, however, it is unknown.

On the evening of the following day the Russian steamer from Constantinople touched here, on her way to Salonica, and we embarked on board of her, and bade farewell to the Holy Mountain. And now that we have left the sacred shores, let us cast a retrospective glance at them, and see what opinion we have formed of these monasteries, which are the very centre of the Greek

Church, and are regarded with so great veneration by all Eastern Christians.

Our estimate of them will vary, as we fix our thoughts on the present or the past. Probably a considerable number of the monks regard the monastic system in no other light than as a source of personal benefit to themselves. The theory, however, which the more thoughtful of them maintain is this,—that these bodies serve as an example of holy life, as they contain a number of men devoted to piety and religion ; that they maintain intact the old customs and principles ; that their constant prayers are a support to the Church ; and that in prosperous times they become seats of learning. How far this theory, even supposing it to be tenable, is carried out in practice, may be gathered from the fact that our dragoman, a trustworthy man, assured us that he had never heard so much foul and disgusting language as in the conversation of the lower monks, among whom he was thrown. We are not to suppose that this applies to the conversation of the ordinary monks, but to a certain number of *mauvais sujets*, who are to be found in each monastery ; yet it is in part the result of the system. Take a number of uneducated peasants from any country, separate them from female society, and give them a certain amount of leisure ; the result will be, that even the purest religious influences, unalloyed by superstition, will not prevent a large amount of evil from being fostered among them. Notwithstanding that we find much that is pleasing in the life of the monks, and that strict morality is enforced by the rigid discipline, yet we cannot but draw the conclusion that eastern monastic life has here been tried on a large scale, is displayed to the greatest advantage—and has failed.

But, whatever may be their faults, and however false,

in a healthy state of the church, the monastic system may be, yet, looking to the past, we must remember that they were once to a certain extent strongholds of learning, and still more strongholds of faith in the midst of unbelievers. To one who reads, however cursorily, the history of the Greek Church, the great source of wonder is, not that its faith has been overlaid by superstition, but that it has retained its Christianity at all: and to this the monasteries have in no slight degree contributed. Besides this, they have served as refuges for the persecuted, and for those perplexed by the distractions and confusions of the world. Thousands have been saved from suicide by their means. And from this point of view the need of them cannot be said to have wholly passed away; for as long as the Turks remain in Europe, the Christians will be persecuted, and as long as they are persecuted, they will need a refuge.

It is a difficult matter to speculate on what may be the future of the Holy Mountain. It was a subject on which we often talked to the monks, and they invariably connected their own future with the political future of Turkey. When the happy period arrives, to which all Greeks look forward, when they are to regain Constantinople, Athos, they think, may once more become the learned place which they believe it to have been in former times. Yet some of them were not slow to see that freedom would open to men various sources of occupation, which would cause them to be less disposed for the monastic calling. It may also be doubtful how far an educational system can be engrafted on the present life of the place, as the experiment was tried in the last century by Eugenius Bulgaris, whose school, as I have already mentioned, ultimately failed. Yet this is the best thing which we can hope for them. We should not wish

to see so venerable an institution destroyed, root and branch, if it is possible by any means to adapt it to the exigencies of a coming time. Let us hope that its suitableness for a seat of learning, from its central, healthy, and secluded position, may hereafter be appreciated, and that its fine buildings may not be left to the ravages of time, to the unavailing regret of future generations.

In conclusion, let me add a very brief history of this unique community, the permanence of which as an institution is altogether unparalleled. The first distinct mention of monks on Athos is in the reign of Basil the Macedonian, who issued a rescript in the year A.D. 885, forbidding the inhabitants of the neighbouring country to disturb “the holy hermits.” At that time it appears that these monks were dependent on a monastery at Hierissus (Erisso)—a restriction on their freedom which was removed by the next emperor, Leo the Philosopher: and from the fact that they are termed “hermits” (*οἱ τὸν ἐρημικὸν βίον ἐλόμενοι*), we may conclude that no monastery had yet been founded on the Holy Mountain. Very shortly afterwards, however, such a society must have been formed, for in 924 a golden bull of Romanus Lecapenus speaks of the restoration by that emperor of the monastery of Xeropotamu, which had been destroyed by the Saracens, and was now rebuilt, with a handsome church, strong walls and towers, and dwellings for sick persons and strangers. But its prosperity was not of long duration, though whether it was again destroyed by the Saracens, or what other causes may have contributed to its downfall, we know not: but otherwise we could not account for the miserable condition in which the inhabitants of the mountain are described as being at the time of the building of the Lavra, and the fact that its

founder, St. Athanasius, is regarded as the real author of the existing system. Of the erection of his monastery (about A.D. 960), with the help of Nicephorus Phocas, we have already spoken ; but his ideas on the subject of the monastic community and its future development seem to have extended beyond this, for the office of "First Man" was founded in his time, apparently as a means of combining and regulating a number of separate societies. About the same period the village of Caryes, which even before this had been a meeting-place for the hermits, was appointed to be the seat of government. The effect of this is seen in the establishment, within a few years, of three other important convents, also on the eastern coast of the peninsula—Iveron and Vatopedi before the end of that century, and Sphigmenu at the commencement of the next. By the time of Constantine Monomachus, less than 100 years from the time of St. Athanasius, the monastic buildings, which had then numbered 58, amounted to 180, containing 700 monks. From that emperor they received a second constitution, in which the intrusion of the female sex was strongly prohibited, and various disputes about land, which had already risen between the various societies, were settled. From him also the peninsula received the name of the Holy Mountain.

Then follows the time of the Comneni (1056-1204), characterized by violent opposition to the Latin Church and Western ideas, together with a temporary resuscitation of Byzantine literature. The emperors of that race, finding the monastic system a support to them in carrying out those ideas, showered their favours upon these convents, and made them independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople, who in early times had appointed the First Man, and exercised a visitatorial authority. Meanwhile the monasteries of Philotheu and

Caracalla had arisen on the eastern coast, and those of Xenophu and Docheiareiu on the western; and to these Pantocratoros and Cutlumusi were added under Manuel and Alexius Comnenus. The fact that one so much interested in literary and theological pursuits as the latter of these two emperors should have been so partial to these convents, renders it probable that at that time they were homes of study and learning. Another event of some importance to the Greek Church, from its tendency to combine the nationalities of which it was composed, took place during his reign in the foundation of Chilandari, the first purely Slavonic monastery. Fallmerayer, indeed, maintains that the majority of the inmates of all the convents were from the first of Slavonic origin—a conclusion which he bases mainly on the fact that old service books in that language are found in many of the libraries.³ And though this assumption is contrary to historical probability, yet it is shown by the evidence of names, that some persons of that race had settled on Athos as early as the end of the 10th century. But this convent was founded exclusively for them, with the leave of the emperor, by the Servian Prince Stephen Nemanja, who himself retired thither; and so independent was their position that at first they were not subject to the control of the First Man, and the other monks were forbidden to interfere in their affairs. These circumstances serve to explain its remote position at the further end of the peninsula.

The taking of Constantinople by the Latins (A.D. 1204) could not fail to have disastrous consequences for the Holy Mountain. Everywhere the Greek rite was treated with the utmost contumely, and the Greek priests and

³ ‘*Fragmenta aus dem Orient*,’ ii. p. 32.

monks were regarded as heretics, and made the objects of unrelenting persecution. With a barbarity worthy of the Saracens, a number of the invaders landed on the coast, and having erected a fort to serve as their head-quarters, destroyed the churches, pillaged the monasteries, and put the monks to the torture, in order to discover the secret of concealed treasures. Reduced to despair by this merciless treatment, the unfortunate community applied for aid to a quarter which, under other circumstances, would have been the last for them to have recourse to—Pope Innocent III. That far-sighted prelate, amongst whose extensive plans the reconciliation of the Eastern Church was one, seized the opportunity of displaying his power and his magnanimity. His answer to the monks breathes a tone of lofty conciliation. He believed the time was come when Samaria would return to Jerusalem. The mountain of the Lord, to which all nations flow, had chosen *their* mountain as a representative of its name; and it was a holy spot, a house of God, a fitting arena for the struggle with Satan. In answer, therefore, to their humble supplications, he agreed to take them under the protection of St. Peter and the Holy See, confirmed to them the immunities and privileges they had hitherto enjoyed, and undertook to defend them from their persecutors. What was the effect of this letter we have no means of judging, but we may conclude that the influence of the Pope availed in their favour, as we hear nothing more of Athos until after the expulsion of the Latins from Constantinople (A.D. 1261).

The succeeding period was not marked by events of any great importance. The Palaeologi seem to have followed the example of their predecessors in bestowing

donations of land on the monasteries, and they were further enriched by gifts from the Servian princes. Among the latter the distinguished Stephen Dushan is mentioned as having visited them in 1345, together with his wife ; from which we gather that the exclusion of females was not absolute ; though, in fact, the same thing has occurred in the present day, Lord Stratford having been allowed on one occasion to bring some of the ladies of his family to the monastery of St. Paul. At this time also Zographu, the second Slavonic convent, was founded. In the struggle between Michael Palaeologus and the Patriarch Arsenius, and in the movements resulting from the intrigues of that emperor with the Western Church, the monks took the popular side against him, and in consequence, on one occasion, brought down his vengeance upon them. The other notices which have come down to us refer mainly to restrictions on the power of the First Man, whose office had gradually assumed overweening proportions. The Patriarch now once more regained his influence over the society ; the neighbouring Bishop of Erisso, who from early times had had certain episcopal rights over the peninsula, was restored to his former footing ; and there are traces of the establishment of a consultative body, composed of the leading monks, which may have been the original of the present representative system. But even with these limitations, the office with its executive powers was something very different from what it is at present, when its holder is merely the president of an assembly.

The middle of the 14th century, however, brought with it events, both political and theological, in which the monks of Athos took a prominent part. The

leading personage of this period is John Cantacuzene, who in his successive characters of rebel against Andronicus I., friend and counsellor of Andronicus II., regent and guardian of his son John Palæologus, and ultimately of emperor, stands out as the most prominent figure in the later Byzantine annals. His history is in many ways interwoven with that of the monks. Already, in the struggle between the two Andronici, the elder of the two emperors had sent Isaac, the First Man of Athos at that period, to his grandson in the character of a mediator ; and, later on, after the death of the younger Andronicus, when the queen, his widow, was persuaded to declare against the authority of Cantacuzene as regent, the same man was employed by him, together with Macarius, the hegumen of the Lavra, the future patriarch Callistus, and another monk famed for his sanctity, to exhort the queen to peace, and to warn her against introducing the horrors of civil war. So intimate was Cantacuzene's connection with the monks of the Holy Mountain, and so consistently did he defend them from the charges of heresy brought against them, that he was suspected of having betaken himself to them during the lifetime of Andronicus II., in order to avail himself of their prophetic power to discover his future prospects. At last, when the tide of fortune finally turned against him, he determined to embrace the monastic profession, for which he had for some time cherished a secret longing, and retired to Athos, where he composed his history and ended his life. His son Matthew, too, who had been associated with him in the empire, and the historian Nicephorus Gregoras, with other writers of the period, betook themselves to this retreat, so that Athos became a home

at once for men of learning, and for politicians weary of the world.

Among the theological movements of this time, the most prominent was that of the Hesychasts, who maintained the doctrine of the uncreated light of Tabor, together with other mystical views connected with it, which we have already noticed. The dispute, which gave occasion for four councils, and involved emperors and patriarchs in its confusion, continued for ten years (1341-51), Gregory Palamas being the leader of the monks' party, on which side also Cantacuzene was found, while Nicephorus Gregoras supported Barlaam and their other opponents. But this was not the only cause of theological excitement. It was commonly reported, and there is good reason for thinking the charge well founded, that the belief of many of the monks was impregnated with the tenets of the Massalians, a sect which had arisen among the Slavonic races in the reign of Alexius Comnenus. They were Dualists, and their doctrines in many respects resembled those of some of the early Gnostics—a class of views to which extravagant asceticism has always proved favourable. The suspicion went so far, that in 1351 a formal investigation was set on foot against the First Man Nephon, before the bishops of Salonica and Erisso; and though they decided that he had done nothing more than receive beggars and needy strangers of that sect, and "that the sun is sometimes darkened with clouds only to shine with greater lustre afterwards," yet for a time the caloyers were brought into considerable disrepute.

The century which intervened before the capture of Constantinople by the Turks was a time of prosperity to these societies, nor did the long death-struggle of the

empire affect them injuriously. It seemed almost as if the emperors and leading men of that time, conscious of the increasing weakness of their position, were disposed to make over a part of their possessions to what seemed to them the safer keeping of the monks. The number of the convents on the western coast was increased in the latter half of the fourteenth century by St. Dionysius', Simopetra, Constamonitu, Russico, and St. Paul's, and numerous dotations in land and tithes were made to those already existing. When the councils of Ferrara and Florence (1438-9) were held, and the last attempt was made to enlist the powers of the West in the defence of Constantinople, by the reunion, or rather submission, of the Eastern to the Latin Church, these caloyers were the strongest opponents of any such concessions. But for themselves, they had already made their terms with the conqueror. The siege and storming of Salonica by Sultan Amurath had in all respects been a lesson to them. There the conqueror had made favourable offers to the Greek Christians, as opposed to the Venetian garrison, whom he treated as Western intruders ; and the pillage which accompanied his conquest warned them what they had to suffer in case of resistance. Moreover, the violence and oppressiveness of the Latins had caused the ecclesiastics to regard the advance of the Mahometans in the light of a deliverance. Accordingly they sent an embassy to him, offering to submit to his government, and requesting a confirmation of their immunities and the possession of their territories—a request to which they obtained an unexpectedly favourable reply. So far indeed was the goodwill carried between the monks of that time and the Turkish conquerors, that in a MS. lately discovered by Professor Tischendorf, there is found

an exaggerated laudation of Mahomet II. by Critobulus, a caloyer of Athos, in which his heroic deeds are celebrated, and every virtue ascribed to him.

From that time to the present the fortunes of the Holy Mountain have been for the most part uneventful, and its position almost unchanged. Soliman the Magnificent is the only Sultan who seems to have attacked the monks ; in his reign their territory was laid waste with fire and sword, and great injury inflicted. On the other hand, his predecessor Selim I. bestowed great favours on them ; and though they have had to bear heavy taxation and exactions, yet they have been allowed to exercise their religion undisturbed. In this way their isolation as a purely Christian community in the midst of the Mahometans caused them to become a bulwark of the Christian faith, and a beacon-light to the whole Eastern Church. The last founded of the monasteries was Stavroniceta, which was established in 1545. The protectorate, which had previously been exercised by the Greek emperors, now passed into the hands of the Hospodars or Voyvodes of Wallachia and Moldavia, who enriched the societies with numerous benefactions. For some time, learning seems to have flourished among them ; thus Metrophanes Critopulus, a young man who was sent to England and Germany by the reforming prelate, Cyril Lucar, with a view of introducing western learning into the east, had been educated on Athos. But the natural tendency of their mode of life, in the absence of any stimulus from without, worked itself out as time went on, and left them as they are now, uninstructed and unprogressive. In all probability, the present century will prove to have affected their fortunes more than any preceding one. The confiscation of their goods in free Greece by Capodistrias, at

the end of the War of Independence, was the beginning of a change, and now the loss of their property in the Principalities must affect them still further. The next move, whatever that may be, will probably accompany the downfall of the Turkish empire, whenever that event comes to pass.⁴

⁴ The facts contained in this notice are mostly from Gass's 'Commentatio Historica de Claustris in Monte Atho sitis,' the original documents are to be found in the 'Urkundenverzeichniss,' in J. Müller's 'Denkmäler in den Klöstern von Athos.'

CHAPTER VII.

SALONICA TO MONASTIR.

Salonica — Its Triumphal Arches — Inscription — Population and History — The Egnatian Way — Roads in Turkey — The Vardar — Khans — Site of Pella — Yenidjé — Vodena — Its Beautiful Situation — The Ancient Edessa — Village and Lake of Ostrovo — Subterranean Channels — Gurnitzovo — Pigs in Turkey — Nidjé and Peristeri — Approach to Monastir.

ABOUT nine o'clock on the morning after we left Athos, the steamer cast anchor in the harbour of Salonica, which forms the innermost bay of the long gulf in which the *Aegean* terminates towards the north-west. As seen from the sea, the aspect of the place is very striking, and recalls the appearance of Genoa, though it is far inferior to that magnificent city. From the water's edge the houses rise gradually up the hill sides towards the north, until they reach the castle which crowns the summit. Like that at Constantinople, it bears the name of the Seven Towers, and was probably called so before the time of the Turkish occupation. Behind it rise the lofty heights of Mount Khortiatzi, from which it is separated by a ridge and a depression ; at this point two valleys commence, and gradually diverge from one another as they descend towards the sea, while their inner sides are surmounted by the picturesque lines of white walls which enclose the city, and are defended at their extremities by two massive towers which rise from the water. In this way, its triangular form, the compact mass of buildings which it presents at one view to the eye, and the numerous elegant minarets which

stand up among them, combine to form an imposing spectacle.

Within, the place is intersected in its lower part by one long street, which runs from east to west, marking the line of the old Via Egnatia, and crossed by two Roman triumphal arches, through which the road entered Thessalonica from the two sides. One of these, which lies some little way within the eastern wall, is a fine arch of brick springing from piers cased in white marble, which are ornamented with an elaborate cornice, and below with sculptured representations of a triumphal procession. This has been thought to have been erected in honour of Constantine, who visited this place after subduing the Sarmatians; but from the very debased character of the sculpture, Leake is disposed to attribute it to the time of Theodosius, whose victories over the Goths were a common subject on the monuments of his age. The other and smaller arch is situated just inside the western wall, close to the Vardar gate, as the modern entrance is called, from its leading in the direction of that river. It is massively built of stone, but the construction is rude, and hardly worthy of a monument erected in commemoration of the battle of Philippi, as Beaujour supposed it to be. Another argument against its being of so early a date, is the occurrence in an inscription on one of the piers of the names *Flavius Sabinus* as belonging to one of the magistrates of that time; from which we may infer that it is later than Vespasian's age, as those names must have been adopted from his family.¹ On the outer side of the arch, under the capitals of both pilasters, is the figure of a horse with hogged mane, and by its side a man wearing a toga. But the principal interest attaching to it is owing to the

¹ Boeckh., 'Corpus Inscriptionum,' No. 1967, note.

name of “Politarchs,” which is given in the inscription to the chief officers of the city, thereby confirming the passage in the Acts (xvii. 6), where the magistrates of this place are called by the same unusual name. In fact, this title does not occur again, except in one other inscription, also referring to Thessalonica, which is mentioned by a French writer of the last century.² They seem to have been seven in number.

The day after our arrival we paid a visit to Mr. Wilkinson, at the British Consulate, and there made the acquaintance of Mr. Crosbie, the Scotch Presbyterian missionary, who is well known for the attention which he shows to visitors to Salonica. Under his auspices we visited the ecclesiastical antiquities of the place; and as the ancient churches have all been converted into mosques, the assistance of one who is acquainted with the Mahometan guardians was of great service in procuring a speedy admittance. Two of these were originally Pagan temples, and several others, which are of Byzantine construction, are of the greatest value for the history of art: in this respect, Salonica is only second to Constantinople. As full details and illustrations of these buildings have been lately published in Texier and Pullan’s magnificent work on Byzantine architecture, which is principally devoted to this city and Trebizond, there is no need for me to say anything further about

² The Abbé Belley, in the ‘Académie des Inscriptions,’ xxxviii. p. 125. All attempts to recover the original of this inscription have been unavailing. The inscription on the gateway has often been copied, but the only accurate reproduction of it is that given by Mr. Vaux of the British Museum in the ‘Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature,’ vol. viii., new series. Since this was written, my friend Mr. Curtis, of Constantinople, has found an inscription at Monastir, brought from a place twelve miles distant from that city, in which the magistrates are called Politarchs. This shows that the title was not confined to Thessalonica, but was found elsewhere in Macedonia. See Appendix B.

them. But as we shall return more than once to this city in the course of our travels, it may be well for me to give some information as to its population and history.

Of the sixty thousand inhabitants of Salonica two-thirds are Jews, the rest being Turks and Greeks, together with a few Wallachs, Armenians, and Franks. The number of Jews is at first sight surprising, and the variation of numbers in the computations of different travellers is so great as to suggest doubts on the subject. Thus Leake estimates them at only 13,000; Cousinéry at 20,000; the 'Jewish Intelligencer' for 1849³ at 35,000; Miss Mackenzie at 40,000. These differences illustrate the difficulty of arriving at accuracy in matters of statistics in Turkey, while in the present case the question is more than usually involved by the Jews having contrived, in order to avoid taxation, that their numbers should be returned officially at a very much lower figure than the reality. But when we find that Paul Lucas, writing in 1714, estimates them at 30,000, and remember that they have always been highly favoured in this place, and that no cause has operated to check their increase, we see no reason to doubt the correctness of the statement given above. From early times the Hebrew race seems to have been attracted by the commercial advantages of Salonica. Thus when St. Paul preached there, he found a considerable Jewish community. And in the twelfth century the traveller of that nation, Benjamin of Tudela, speaks of them as amounting to five hundred. But by far the larger proportion of the present Jewish population are descended from those who were expelled from Spain and migrated hither in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, as is proved by their still speaking among themselves a debased form of Spanish. A large number

In Conybeare and Howson's 'Life and Epistles of St. Paul,' i. p. 383.

of them are rich merchants, and a great part of the wealth of the place is in their hands.

To turn now to the history of Salonica. The Greek city of Therma, which first occupied this site, though a place of some consideration, did not give promise of its future greatness. It was not until Roman times, when, under its new name of Thessalonica, it became an important point on the line of communication between Rome and the East, that it came to be regarded as a centre, and was acknowledged as the chief city of Macedonia. From the establishment of the Imperial power to the building of Constantinople it was the capital of the whole country from the Adriatic to the Black Sea ; and the position of the two gates now existing, together with the Roman work found in the modern walls, prove that its extent could not have been very different then from what it is at present. After the founding of the new seat of empire it retained its importance as a stronghold of resistance to the barbarians, who now began to inundate the neighbouring countries. From the fourth to the end of the eighth century it succeeded in repelling the invaders ; first the Goths, and then the numerous Slavonic tribes who descended from the Danube. But it is from the calamities that have befallen it at various times that Thessalonica is principally known in history. The fearful massacre of the citizens by the order of Theodosius, which has been rendered famous by the excommunication of that emperor, and his exclusion from the cathedral of Milan by St. Ambrose, was the first in this list of tragedies. It was occasioned by the murder of the emperor's lieutenant by the populace ; on hearing the news of which, in an access of fury, Theodosius sent word from Milan, where he then resided, that the inhabitants should be gathered together into the hippodrome

on pretence of a spectacle, and there slaughtered by his soldiers. A memorial of the scene of this event still remains in a handsome white marble portico near the centre of the town, which was probably the entrance to the hippodrome. It is called by the neighbouring Jews, in whose quarter it stands, *Las Incantadas*, or “the enchanted women,” from the eight caryatides which stand in the upper part of the structure, and were supposed to have been petrified by the effect of magic. Subsequently to this, the city was three times besieged and captured. In the year 904 a Saracen fleet appeared before it, and after storming the sea-wall, pillaged the whole place, and butchered the citizens without respect of sex or age. A large number of those who were spared were carried off and sold as slaves in various parts of the Mediterranean. Again, in 1185, another enemy arose from a different quarter. The Normans of Sicily, under their commander Tancred, having landed at Dyrrhachium, marched across and gained possession of Thessalonica after a ten days’ siege. An account of the barbarities that were perpetrated on that occasion, and the wanton insults offered by the Latins to the Greek rite, has been left us by Eustathius, the celebrated commentator, who was Archbishop of that city at the time. Still later, in 1430, occurred the final siege by Sultan Amurath II., which has already been referred to in connection with Mount Athos. Since that time it has remained in possession of the Turks, and has continued to be a place of importance; though, if Mr. Finlay is right in estimating its population at 220,000 at the time of the Saracen siege, it must have greatly declined since the Middle Ages. But from its fine harbour and admirable commercial position relatively to the interior of European Turkey, it can hardly fail at some future time, under more favourable

auspices, to regain a considerable portion of its former greatness.

After remaining two days at Salonica, we were prepared to start afresh, and penetrate once more into the interior ; our object being now to make for Corfu, which was the next stage in our journey. There are two routes by which that place may be reached from Salonica ; the one by Larissa and Joannina, the other through Central Albania, by Monastir, Elbassan, and Berat. The former of these is in some respects the most interesting, as it comprises, besides the two cities already named, the Vale of Tempe and plains of Thessaly, the monasteries of Meteora and Zitza, and the gorge of the Acheron. This route we had taken on a former occasion, and I hope to give some account of it later on. We now determined to follow the more northerly course, which gives you unusual opportunities of studying the various races of European Turkey, especially the wilder tribes of Albanians. Besides this, as far as Elbassan, it corresponds in great measure, if not entirely, to the line of the Egnatian Way, which for many centuries was the great artery of communication between Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem ; and again, during the Middle Ages, it was on two occasions the route by which the Normans made inroads into the Eastern empire, and was the scene of many important conflicts in later Byzantine history.

During the two days that we remained at Salonica the weather had been cloudy and stormy, and I then realised what I had never felt before—the pleasure of pale colours. After the glare of sunshine and bright tints to which we had been accustomed, the cool greys and browns of the sky and mountains were quite a relief to the eye. When, however, on the 27th of August, we left Salonica by the

Vardar gate, we were unpleasantly reminded of England by a driving rain and northerly wind. The first part of the way we rode along the remains of a wretched road, full of ruts and mire, the history of which is worth relating, as a specimen of the way in which things are done in Turkey. The authorities determined that a *Route Impériale* should be made from Salonica to Monastir ; the Pasha fixed a day for the inauguration ; all the foreign consuls were requested to appear, each with his spade ; the Turkish engineer also came with a theodolite, which he did not know how to use ; the ceremony was celebrated with great pomp ; and the result is—that from Salonica to Vodena, the most important part of the way, almost the only approach to a road is this wretched piece, which has now been allowed to fall into decay. Escaping from this we entered on a sandy plain, which reaches for sixty miles westward from Salonica, and is bounded on three sides by mountains of considerable height ; in this part it is tufted by numerous tamarisk bushes, and bears many large tumuli. The only persons whom we met on the way were a few traders with pack-horses. Throughout the whole distance, at intervals, we found two parallel trenches cut, about twenty yards apart, being the commencement of the route, but there were no signs of the road being in course of making. The need of means of communication is the first obstacle in the way of improvement in Turkey at the present day, nor does there seem any prospect of a change for the better in the condition of things in this respect. Now-a-days the cause is rather the inertness of the Government, and the peculation which pervades every branch of the public service ; but in former times there was a rooted dislike of any attempt to facilitate locomotion on the part of Turkish politicians, and this in all probability survives

among a certain class of them even now. M. Kinneir has pertinently remarked on this subject, in his ‘Memoir of the Persian Empire,’ that “It is a favourite idea with all barbarous princes that the badness of the roads adds considerably to the natural strength of their dominions. The Turks and Persians are undoubtedly of this opinion ; the public highways are therefore neglected, and particularly so towards the frontiers.”⁴

We had been late in starting from the city, in consequence of the *kharidji*, or carrier, whose horses we had hired for the journey, refusing to go, on account of the bad weather. We had neglected to take from him the *caparra*, or deposit, which may always be required when an agreement of this kind is made, until the horses are forthcoming : thus we had no means of holding him to his bargain, and were forced at the last moment to look out for another man. In consequence of this we were unable to reach the town of Yenidje, as we intended, and were forced to stop at a country *khan*, or inn, on the banks of the Vardar or Axius, whose red muddy stream is here crossed by a long wooden bridge. The turbid water of this river is mentioned by Strabo,⁵ who finds a difficulty in reconciling it with the Homeric description, “the fairest stream that flows on earth.” The unhealthiness of the neighbourhood was shown by the appearance of the *khanji*, or innkeeper, a young Greek, with a yellow face and swollen legs. In like manner Salonica, from the proximity of marshes and undrained land, has a bad name for fevers throughout the Levant ; and though the English residents there combat this statement, yet it was confirmed by the numerous Italian *commis voyageurs* who occupied the same *locanda* with

⁴ Kinneir’s ‘Persia,’ p. 43.

⁵ vii. Fragm. 21, 23.

ourselves, almost all of whom were suffering from malaria. As the general features of most khans are the same, I will describe our resting-place. It is a square enclosure, on one side of which are haylofts and stables, while on the opposite side are a number of small chambers, destined for the human part of the company, with clay floors and walls, and a thatched roof, through a hole in which, in the absence of windows, ventilation is conveniently carried on. The only furniture is a rush mat for each person. In one of these unpromising abodes, if there are neither rats nor scorpions (we heard of the latter, but never saw them), you can make yourself fairly comfortable. I used to have a quantity of hay brought in to serve as a bed ; on this were spread railway rugs, of which we had a plentiful supply ; and over all the *levinge*,⁶ or sleeping-bag, within which the traveller is safe from all kinds of vermin. A knapsack or air-cushion, with a great coat, used to serve as a pillow. No doubt a tent and mattresses will ensure you greater comfort, but apart from the expense and delay inseparable from a number of extra baggage-horses, there is one fatal objection to tent-life in these countries—it separates you from the people, and prevents you from seeing their life and habits. The khans in the towns are somewhat less simple in their arrangements than what I have described, but the quantity of vermin that breeds in their wooden floors will soon make you wish yourself back in the country again.

On starting the next morning, I asked our host the name of a mountain to the south-west, whose broad base alone was visible beneath a dense mass of cloud. "Elympos," was his reply. It is remarkable that the great

⁶ A description of this inestimable contrivance is given in Murray's 'Handbook for Greece.'

centre of Homeric mythology should have retained its name to the present time,—alone, I believe, of all the Greek mountains ; unless, perhaps, Liakura, the modern name of Parnassus, is a corruption of Likorea, the former name of one of its summits. Athos also must be excepted, but there the name has been preserved by the monks ; possibly the existence of the name Olympus may be due to the same cause, for there are several very ancient monasteries on its sides. But, at all events, it is not a mere revival of the classical name, as is the case with so many places in free Greece, for it occurs in some of the Romaic ballads. Further to the south the conical peak of Ossa was visible, separated from Olympus by a depression which marked the position of Tempe, and beyond all rose the broad hump of Pelion. The northern continuation of the range of Olympus, which is called the Bermian chain, lay in front of us, forming the western limit of the plain. After crossing another branch of the Axius by a ferry, we rode on for some distance, passing on the way numbers of four-wheeled carts of very simple construction, drawn by oxen or blear-eyed buffaloes, and driven by peasants with long lance-like staves. The country population throughout the whole district is Bulgarian. At last we reached a khan by the road-side, opposite which is a spring of water issuing from a ruined mass of Roman masonry. The ruins are called “The Baths” (*τὰ λουτρά*) by the people of the country, and are probably the same baths which, in classical times, are alluded to as producing bilious attacks ;⁷ the khan and its vicinity bear the name of Pel. This name, together with some pieces of pottery and marble blocks in the fields and Turkish cemeteries, and a number of large

⁷ See the story in ‘Athenæus,’ viii. p. 348.

tumuli on the low hills to the south, in the neighbourhood of the village of Alaklisi, are the only remains of what was once Pella, the birthplace and capital of Alexander the Great. It is not a striking position for a great metropolis, but its nearness to the sea must have been its chief recommendation. We are now entering the land of the two Iskanders : in this neighbourhood our thoughts are all of Alexander the Great, and before long we shall be passing the country of

“ — his namesake, whose oft-baffled foes
Shrank from his deeds of chivalrous emprise—”

the heroic Scanderbeg. We halted about noon at the town of Yenidje, the views of which, as we approached, were backed by a fine mountain ridge, the Peik Dagh. In the neighbourhood of this place and of the khan of Pel there extends to the southwards a dull green marsh, and beyond it a lake, though this is not visible from the plain : we were told, however, that a fish which was brought us for our dinner had been caught there. A canal, which ran in this direction in former times, formed a communication between Pella and the sea. The fish of this lake were also famous among the ancients, and were said to be particularly fat in summer.⁸ The marsh used to bear the unprepossessing name of Borboros, or “Mud,” as we learn from a satirical epigram directed against Aristotle, in which that philosopher is attacked for preferring the company of Philip and Alexander to that of the Athenians : he is there said to have “ preferred the mouth of the Borboros to the Academy.”⁹

⁸ “Τὸν χρόμιν ἐν Πέλλῃ λήψη μέγαν ἔστι δὲ πίων,
ἀν θέρος γῆ.”—(‘Athen.,’ vii. p. 328.)

⁹ In Plutarch, ‘De Exilio,’ εἴλετο ναίειν ἀντ’ Ἀκαδημίας Βορβόρου ἐν προχοαις.

From thence pursuing our course along the plain, later in the day we forded the broad shallow stream of the Moglenitiko, which was probably called Lydias in ancient times. The stream which carries the waters of the lake of Pella into the sea was certainly called by that name, and as the Moglenitiko flows into that lake, and is its principal feeder, it probably bore the same appellation, and was regarded as passing through it. In the lower part of its course it seems to have changed its direction since the time of Herodotus, who speaks of it as joining the Ha-liacmon,¹⁰ whereas now it flows into the Vardar, just before that river reaches the sea : but in a wide extent of plain, intersected by several large rivers, such a change is easily explicable.¹¹ In the neighbourhood of the Moglenitiko we passed some scenery of a very English character —an open common, with cattle grazing, near which was a Bulgarian village in the midst of trees. At sunset we entered a narrower plain, which forms an offset from the great plain of Salonica. The stream which waters this is a tributary of the river just mentioned, and leads up to Vodena.

This city stands in a singular and most beautiful situation. Below three ranges of mountains, which, when seen from a distance, seem to rise one behind the other, a valley descends, about a mile and a half wide ; nearly half-way down it is filled up from side to side by a level table of land, the base of which projects towards the plain with a gradual curve, like the side of an amphitheatre, and then falls in precipices of some two hundred feet in height. The town lies on the level, and some of its houses overhang the edge of the precipice, which is

¹⁰ ‘Herod.,’ vii. 127.

¹¹ The statement of Strabo (vii. Fragm. 20), that the lake of Pella was formed by a branch of the Axios, is undoubtedly erroneous.

further diversified by poplars and other trees, and in one or two places by the tall minarets which rise behind. The precipices themselves, which consist of conglomerate rock, are picturesquely ornamented with bushes, while the well-irrigated plain below is covered with fruit-trees, and crops of maize, often rising to the height of ten feet. But the most marked feature of all are the cascades ; for the clear river, which descends from the upper part of the valley, divides into a number of smaller streams, which pass through the town, and plunge at various points down the steep rocks, forming an exquisite addition to the view, wherever a number of them can be seen together. The view from the city, especially that from the Archbishop's palace, which is situated on the verge of the cliff, is not less fine. Beyond the orchards and maize-grounds, which are below you, you look over the narrow plain hemmed in by mountains, and beyond this the wide plain, only bounded, at a distance of sixty miles, by the heights beyond Salonica ; a bright stripe of sea also appears, and the lake of Pella, which from its marshy character we had not seen when crossing the plain : on both sides are fine mountain ranges, and to the south the chain of the *long, many-crested, snowy Olympus* (*μακρὸς πολυδειρὰς ἀγάννιφος "Ολυμπός*). As it is seen from this point, all the Homeric epithets are strikingly applicable ; even at this season the northern slopes were thickly patched with snow in consequence of the late storms. The position of this city is not less remarkable in a geographical point of view, commanding, as it does, the principal pass, which leads from the plains into the upper regions of Macedonia ; it was this which caused it to be selected early as the site of Edessa, the original capital of Macedonia, before the seat of government was removed to Pella by Philip of Macedon. Even after

that time it continued to be the national hearth of the Macedonian race, and the burial-place of their kings. It may in every respect be truly called a magnificent nursery for a magnificent kingdom.

The interior of the place presents few objects of interest, but in passing through it the eye is everywhere refreshed by the abundance of water, which gushes forth from walls in unexpected places, and courses at will down the middle of the rough pavement of the streets. The point where the stream divides at the back of the city is the favourite lounge of the wealthier citizens, and is admirably adapted for Oriental enjoyment. Here twelve enormous plane-trees rise together in a group, affording a grateful shade, and forming a dim twilight of glancing green, while the ear is soothed by the murmur of rushing waters. The division of the river is said to be of natural formation, but at present its appearance is certainly artificial. Its numerous branches, together with the cascades below, have given the city its Slavonic name of Vodena, or "the place of waters" (*voda*, Slav. for "water").¹²

The valley behind Vodena is green and fertile, and at its head the *Route Impériale*, which in this part for some little distance is a very fair road, winds up a steep mountain-side, commanding superb views over the town and the wide expanse to the east. We were now leaving lower Macedonia, and entering the upper and more mountainous districts of that province. At intervals the valley opened out into narrow plains, the green vegetation of which might at a distance be taken for rich crops,

¹² The ancient name, Edessa, had the same signification, being derived from *bedu*, the Phrygian word for "water." Similarly the Edessa in Mesopotamia is said by Stephanus to have received its name from the force of its waters. Ægæ, also, the earlier name of the Macedonian Edessa, perhaps corresponds in meaning to our "springs."

but in reality is nothing but the waving reeds that cover undrained morasses. At the sides of the roads are numerous melon gardens, which, being entirely open, render necessary a constant watch. Thus at some conspicuous point a shed of branches is raised upon a small platform to shelter the guardian of the fruit. The weather had now cleared up, and was bright and fresh, and in consequence of the rain, and the wonderful transparency of the atmosphere, every leaf on the trees, and every stalk of maize, was clearly defined and extraordinarily bright. From this time until we reached Corfu, though travelling in so hilly a country as Albania, we had a continuance of almost unbroken sunshine. The upper part of the pass was rugged and uncultivated. When we began to descend on the other side, we came in sight successively of two lakes ; first, the small lake of Gugova, which is situated high up a hill-side ; and afterwards that of Ostrovo, a large sheet of water, which appears ten miles long by two broad, running nearly from north to south, and deeply imbedded amongst wild and bare mountains, one of which, above the head of the lake, was sprinkled with snow. This was the peak of Mount Nidjé, the highest point in all the district, reaching an elevation of between seven and eight thousand feet ; in respect of its position also it is important, since the mountain system of these parts may be regarded as culminating in it, while to the north of it commences the Babuna range, which forms the eastern boundary of the plain of Monastir.

From the village of Ostrovo, which lies on the shore near the upper end, the object which most attracts the eye is a single mosque with a minaret by its side, which rises out of the water at the distance of half a mile. On inquiring from the inhabitants the history of this building, we found that it is the remains of a submerged town,

which formerly extended from this point to the present line of the shore. Less than a century ago there was no lake in this region, and many towns existed in various parts of the valley; but about sixty years from the present time (so we were told) the waters rose and overwhelmed all the lower part of the valley; and about twenty-five years ago there was a further rise, and all but a small part of the town of Ostrovo was submerged. Again, in 1859, the lake rose several feet, but fortunately retired again: the signs of this last inundation are traceable in several places about the head of the lake. The explanation of this phenomenon is to be found in the formation of the valley, which, like those in the Morea, which contain the lakes of Pheneus and Stymphalus, is so closely hemmed in by the mountains that it has no escape for its waters. No doubt, as in the case of these lakes, there is a subterranean channel, by which the water was formerly carried off, and discharged in the form of a river at a considerable distance, and the lake was formed in consequence of the stoppage of the channel; so that at some future time, when the weight of water is sufficient to remove the obstruction, the lake of Ostrovo may again be replaced by a green valley, and its submerged towns may reappear. When I visited the lake Stymphalus in the spring of 1853, the waters were low, and the cavern, which formed the mouth of the outlet, or Catavothra, as it is called (*τὰ καταβάραθρα, καταβῶθρα*), was visible: the people of these parts did not know of the existence of such a place, but of course, while the lake is full, it is covered by the water. At the same time I should mention that, on bathing near the village, we found the water deep close to the shore, and that there is reason to believe that a lake, though not necessarily of any size, existed here in former times.

The name of Ostrovo is in itself an evidence of this, being derived from *Ostrov*, the Slavonic word for “island.” But it is possible that at one period in the interval the lake may have become completely dry.¹³

The phenomena just mentioned seem to have given rise to a variety of legends among the ancient Greeks, such as that of Alpheius pursuing Arethusa beneath the sea, and the reappearance of the latter as a fountain in the island of Ortygia at Syracuse. A curious version of this legend arose at a later period, after it had been modified, apparently, by the pious fancies of Christian pilgrims. It is mentioned by Marifiotti, an old Italian writer,¹⁴ that the Syracusans of his time gave credit to a popular tradition concerning this fountain, that there existed a connexion between it and the river Jordan, since in autumn the fountain was said to throw up leaves of such trees as were known to flourish only on the banks of that river. A similar story with regard to the Alpheius still exists in the islands of the Strophades, which lie off the west coast of the Morea. In the account of those islands, appended to his book on the ‘Condition of the Greek Church,’ Dean Waddington tells us: “There exists a traditional circumstance, by which it would seem that nature has intended a perpetual union between the Strophades and the continent; for the monks inform me of faithful records to prove that the Alpheius has frequently presented himself at a well in this island, and deposited there shrubs, flowers, roots, or leaves, which had been confided to him in Elis. The

¹³ The Mediævals seem to have had the idea of there being a catavothra from the lake of Ostrovo, but they supposed its waters to be carried to Vodena. Thus Cedrenus writes (ii. p. 453, ed. Bonn):—“φρούριον δὲ τὰ Βοδηνὰ ἐπὶ πέτρας ἀποτόμου κείμενον, δι’ ἧς καταρρεῖ τὸ τῆς λίμνης τοῦ Οστροβοῦ ὑδωρ ὑπὸ γῆς κάτωθεν ρέον ἀφανῶς κάκεῖσε πάλιν ὑποδυόμενον.”

¹⁴ Quoted in Wilkinson’s ‘Magna Græcia,’ p. 15.

monks, who are certainly not very credulous except where their superstitions are concerned, are bold enough to disbelieve this story; but to me it seems nothing improbable that in his subteraqueous journey to visit his Arethusa, the old river god should pause at this delightful resting-place, and here resign some portion of the tribute intended for his Syracusan mistress.”¹⁵ The ancients had not failed to notice the same phenomenon. Thus Pliny, in one of his Letters, speaks of a lake being carried off by a river, “but when this has been visible for a short time, it disappears in a cavern, and flows at a great depth below; and whatever it received before it was engulfed is preserved and brought forth again.”¹⁶ Catullus also has framed a somewhat laboured simile out of the disappearance of the water of the lake Pheneus,—

“ ‘Twas then, Laodamia, oh most fair!
 From thee was torn a husband, prized above
 Thy life and soul; so wert thou hurried there,
 Upon the whirling torrent of thy love,
 “ Into a steep-down gulf, as dark and deep
 As that which erst, in Grecian story famed,
 Where rolls Pheneus by Cyllene’s steep,
 From oozy marsh the fertile soil reclaim’d.”¹⁷

In cases where the river reappears at a great distance from the lake which supplies it with water, such as the instance which Herodotus mentions, of the Erasinus in Argolis being connected with the Stymphalian lake,¹⁸ the real way in which the correspondence is proved is

¹⁵ ‘Waddington, on the Greek Church,’ p. 105.

¹⁶ Pliny, viii. 20.

¹⁷ Catull., lxviii. 109 (Theodore Martin’s translation). Mr. Martin reads *Peneus*, which does not suit the passage, and the word is pronounced *Phēnēus*.

¹⁸ Herod. vi. 76.

by the subsidence of the one coinciding with the overflow of the other.¹⁹

We rode round the head of the lake, the heavy oppressive atmosphere of which reminded my companion of that of the Dead Sea, and ascended the rough stony heights on the other side, leading up to the pass which connects this valley with the plain of Monastir. From one point we caught a glimpse of another lake to the south ; not, however (as Mr. Lear says, in his ‘Journals of a Landscape Painter’), the lake of Castoria, which is hidden by intervening mountains, but that of Sarigöl. At the summit of the pass we stopped the night at the village of Gurnitzovo, the inhabitants of which we at once discovered to be Christians by two infallible signs, one negative and the other positive—the absence of minarets and the presence of pigs. These signs have been noticed by other travellers. In the Journal of the Patriarch Macarius we find the observation, “There is a church in the town, and hogs feed at large in the streets,” and Dr. Walsh, in his ‘Journey from Constantinople to England,’ says of a village in Bulgaria, “Its appearance at once struck me that I had got into a Christian country. In the green before the houses was a large herd of swine, the first I had seen since my arrival in Turkey.” In consequence of the pig being in this manner a Christian animal, there is a tax on pigs in Turkey, and this at the present time is of a very oppressive character. Up to the year 1858 it was moderate enough, but since that date the rate has been ten piastres

¹⁹ The numerous words used in Greek to describe this phenomenon show how familiar it must have been to the ancients. Thus the subterranean passage itself was called *βάραθρον* (in Arcadia, *ζέρεθρον*), *βόθρος*, *πόρος*, *ρεῖθρον ὑπόνυμον*, *ἔναυλος*, *ἔκρυστις*. The entrance was termed *χάσμα*, the exit *ἔκρηξις*, *ἐκβολή*, *ἀναβολή*, *ἀναχοή*. See Ulrichs’ ‘Reisen in Griechenland,’ p. 223.

(about twenty pence) per head, which is charged when the animal is three months' old. The risk incurred from the payment of so large a tax on so young an animal is so great, that many of them are killed shortly after birth, and the decrease in the numbers bred of late years has been fully 50 per cent. In this way an important article of food is being lost to the peasantry, and subsistence rendered more difficult to them, without any corresponding advantage to the exchequer of the empire.²⁰ The subject population in the country districts of all this part of Turkey is composed of Bulgarian Christians; there is also a considerable Turkish population, and the two races are found sometimes, as at Ostrovo, living together in the same village, sometimes in separate villages. Gurnitzovo was sold by the Porte to Ali Pasha, or, more probably, was forcibly seized by him, and reduced to the condition of a farm, or peculiar. The same thing occurred to a great number of places throughout Thessaly and Epirus. On the death of that chieftain, and the overthrow of his government, the Porte thought fit to retain them as government farms, and in addition to this they are taxed most unmercifully. The people here complained bitterly of their condition. The imperial farms are said to be very badly managed, even as regards the land itself; for since the Government is unwilling to grant long leases, and the tenure is for the most part from year to year, the occupants are naturally unwilling to expend their energy or capital upon it, and the rental is very small, while the land is exhausted without care for the future.

Owing to the elevation of this place (for it is 2900 feet above the sea), the air the next morning was clear and

²⁰ See Farley's 'Turkey,' p. 110.

cold. As we descended, at an hour's distance from the village, we reached a ridge, from which we beheld in front of us the long plain of Monastir stretching away to the north, with the town dimly visible at the foot of the mountains on the western side. The outline of this chain is flat, so that the view can be called grand only from its extent; and the one summit of great elevation, which rises above the rest, lies back from the plain, and is little seen from its opposite side. This is Mount Peristeri, which reaches an elevation somewhat higher than that of Mount Nidjé, and overlooks the valley behind Monastir. Its name, which signifies "The Dove," is an almost singular instance in this part of the country of the use of a Greek word to designate one of the natural features, the rest being almost universally either Turkish, or, as is most commonly the case, Slavonic. Descending still further, we passed the tomb of a Mahometan saint and a Turkish cemetery, while on our right the snow-capped ridge of Nidjé once more appeared. Shortly after this we arrived at the pretty village of Tulbeli, which is dignified in Greek with the name of a *κωμόπολις*, or country town, as places of this size are called, to distinguish them from an ordinary village (*χωριόν*), and a town (*πολιτεία*).²¹

From thence we rode over an expanse of loose stones, the aspect of which might almost recal the plain of the Crau, near Arles, in the south of France, where Jupiter, according to the legend, is said to have cast down the boulders and pebbles with which it is covered, to provide missiles for Hercules in his contest with the Ligurians. When at last we reached the plain, our track lay across it in an oblique direction towards the city. The small

²¹ On the scene of Brasidas' retreat from Lyncestis, see Appendix C.

streams which we passed were running northwards, for the river Czerna, the ancient Erigon, by which the plain is drained, after flowing from north to south throughout the greater part of its course, bends round to the north-east, where it reaches the lower end, and passing between Mount Nidjé and the extremity of the Babuna mountains, descends towards the Vardar, which river it joins some way below the city of Kiuprili. As we approached Monastir, we once more joined the *Route Impériale*, on which we met numerous passengers—some on foot, others mounted on donkeys—as we entered the avenue which leads up to the city. Earlier in the year, the road is said for a time to be crowded with strings of horses and mules, which carry the corn that is grown in this upland region for exportation to the sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

MONASTIR AND OCHRIDA.

Monastir— Its Importance — Massacre of the Albanian Beys — Monastery of Bukova — Plain of Monastir — Legend of the Temenidæ — Turkish Outrages — The Bulgarians — Their History — Bulgarian Church Movement — Monastir to Ochrida — Lake of Presba — Lake of Ochrida — The City — Ancient Statue and Crucifix — Legend of St. Clement — Cyril and Methodius — Statues and Pictures.

MONASTIR, or, as the Christians call it, Bitolia, which is the military centre and most important place in this district of Turkey, is situated in an angle running in from the western side of the plain. Its appearance from outside is beautiful from the trees, especially the bright glistening poplars, which are interspersed among the houses, and the numerous minarets and domed mosques, the latter of which features we had not seen since leaving Cavalla : inside, too, there is a more cleanly and regular appearance about the streets than is found in most Turkish towns, and there is an unusual air of business, and shops of some pretensions. Here, also, one meets once more such unwonted sights as cavalry barracks, a parade ground, Turkish soldiers, and foreign consuls. In the winter there is a force of about 4000 men stationed here, but at other times of the year they are dispersed about the country. We could not learn that any of them had been drawn off to join in the operations which were then preparing against Montenegro ; indeed they can hardly be spared, as there is no other military force in the country nearer than Salonica on the one side

and Scodra on the other. The military importance of Monastir is great from several points of view. In the first place it is the meeting-point of several lines of road, from Salonica on the Ægean, from Durazzo on the Adriatic, and from Uskiub and Adrianople in the interior. Besides this, it is the most accessible point from which an army can penetrate into Albania, and the passage into that country which it commands, though difficult, is yet considered practicable for artillery. To this it must be added, that from here it is possible to act independently against Northern and Southern Albania, and separate the races which inhabit those countries respectively. The population is about 40,000, and is principally composed of Turks and Wallachs, the latter being the mercantile class, as the Bulgarians are the cultivators of the soil. There are also a few Greeks.

The parade-ground, which we had seen on entering the city, at the end of the avenue by which we approached, was in 1830 the scene of an event of considerable importance in later Turkish history—the massacre of the Albanian Beys. It was an act of the most scandalous perfidy, contrived with the utmost deliberation; but, since the fall of Ali Pasha, no other circumstance has tended so much to establish the Ottoman power in these parts, as it led to the final overthrow of the local chieftains in Albania. The history of it is as follows. After the conclusion of the Greek War of Independence, the Albanian soldiery who had been employed by the Turks in that struggle returned to their native country, and there began to pillage the villages indiscriminately. When at last this state of things became unendurable, the petty chiefs combined themselves into a sort of oligarchy for the purpose of restoring order, the lead being taken amongst them by three persons—Seliktar Poda, who commanded

Central Albania, and had gathered round him the remains of Ali Pasha's faction—Veli Bey, who held Yanina and the rest of Epirus, and concealed his ambitious designs by pretending to support the reforms introduced by the Porte—and Arslan Bey, a noble and dashing young officer of twenty-five years of age, who professed to represent the national party, and was consequently the most popular of the three. In reality, however, another personage of greater importance was behind the scenes in this movement, which he was prepared to employ for purposes of his own, in the shape of Mustapha Pasha of Scodra, the last of the hereditary Pashas of that place, and the most formidable chieftain then remaining in Albania. The three leaders just mentioned were at first at variance among themselves, and by their rivalry paralysed one another's action: when, however, they found that the Porte was about to undertake operations against them, and the danger became pressing, a conference was arranged between Veli and Arslan, at which, after a protracted discussion, they gave one another the kiss of peace, and then proceeded to proclaim to their troops that they had made common cause with a view to united action. Meanwhile the Grand Vizir, Reschid Pasha, perceiving that mischief was brewing in Albania, and well aware of the ambitious designs of Mustapha, had assembled a force at Adrianople, with which he marched to Monastir. On reaching that place, when he received intelligence of the reconciliation of the two chiefs, he conducted himself as if compelled to change his plan of action, and after proclaiming a general amnesty, invited all the Albanian Beys to a grand banquet at Monastir, to celebrate the re-establishment of friendly relations with the central government. The invitation was

accepted, and the Beys presented themselves, to the number of four or five hundred, headed by Arslan and Veli.

But the proposed meeting was only a device to conceal an act of the basest treachery. On their first arrival the Vizir received them with great affability and kindness, and encouraged them with the most specious promises. But when, at the time appointed for the banquet, they approached the *rendezvous*, which was the parade-ground already mentioned, they were dismayed to find a thousand regular troops drawn up on two sides of a square, the one along their route, the other facing them. On seeing this, Arslan Bey exclaimed to Veli, "We have eaten dirt;" to which the other replied, "This is the *regular* way of doing honour." Immediately after, a fatal volley poured in amongst the Albanians, followed by a charge with the bayonet. Veli Bey instantly fell, but Arslan and others survived, and were wheeling off to the right, when the volley and charge of the second Turkish line took them in flank. From this Arslan alone escaped, and was soon at a distance from the bloody scene. But his flight had been observed, and Khior Ibrahim Pasha, one of the Grand Vizir's subordinates, immediately mounted a swift horse and gave chase. At the end of three miles he came up with him, when Arslan turned suddenly round, and, facing his opponent, discharged his pistol at him, which brought down his horse. But Ibrahim had already placed his lance in rest, and, as he fell, he ran Arslan Bey through and through. The scalps of the Beys were salted, and conveyed to Constantinople.

The effect of this disgraceful massacre was to leave only two powers in Albania capable of making any resistance. The one was Seliktar Poda in the south, who had

made himself master of Yanina in the interval ; but when a force of 16,000 men was sent against him, he was forced to fly, and the whole of Epirus fell into the hands of the conquerors. The other was Mustapha Pasha, a more formidable opponent. His resistance was of a serious character, and had he known how to profit by his opportunities, he might have taken Reshid unprepared at Monastir, where he was accompanied by only a small body of troops. As it was, he gave that wily general time to enlist the Christians in his service, by holding out to them an opportunity of taking vengeance on their hereditary enemies, the Albanians ; and to win the support of the Mahometan chiefs in Macedonia, by showing to them that the dismemberment of the empire would lead to their subjugation to Russia. The decisive struggle took place near Perlepe, where, after a hard fight, the Albanians were defeated. Mustapha Pasha was forced to retire to Scodra, where he was besieged in the fortress of Rosapha, and ultimately compelled to surrender.¹

By the kindness of our consul, Mr. Charles Calvert, we were invited to pass the night at the little monastery of Bukova, or "The Beeches," which nestles in the mountain-side, at a height of several hundred feet above the town, and in which he had taken refuge from the intense heat of the summer. As we were riding out we met some of the Pasha's hawks, which were being brought home by mounted attendants from a hawking expedition ; for that amusement is still a favourite one in these parts. The plain, which is forty miles in length by ten in breadth, is a wonderful sight as seen from the monastery ; it is extremely fertile, though at the end of August it was brown, from the crops having been removed. All

¹ Cyprien Robert, 'Les Slaves de Turquie,' ii. pp. 197-212; Urquhart, 'Spirit of the East,' i. pp. 308-310.

down the centre runs a long line of green, caused by the marshes which form along the banks of the river Czerna, the ground near which has never been drained; and in various parts lie 170 villages, the inhabitants of which are partly small cultivators, partly peasants employed by the large proprietors. The whole plain is environed by fine mountains: directly opposite, to the east, is the long Babuna chain, which, though not seen in its full proportions, on account of the elevation of the plain, presents a picturesque and broken outline: but the most conspicuous of all are the distant snow-capped heights of Kritchova to the north-east. Close to the foot of these, in another plain, lies the town of Perlepe, where a great fair for the whole of this territory and Albania is held once a year in the month of August. Traders resort to it from all parts of the country, and the retail dealers depend on it in great measure for their supply. A great quantity of merchandize is brought overland from Vienna; but this year, in consequence of the financial and commercial crisis throughout the Levant, hardly any business was done. This part of the country appears to be a great mart for Austrian wares; whereas in southern and part of central Albania the goods are, or were, almost entirely from England, being introduced by way of Corfu: this was one considerable advantage which this country used to derive from the possession of that island. The plain of Monastir, in consequence of its position, being removed from the sea, and 1500 feet above it, and surrounded by high mountains, is exposed to great and sudden changes of temperature; in summer the glass frequently standing at 104 in the shade, while in the winter for two months the ground is thickly covered with snow. It is the natural consequence of this that, as at Madrid, which is in a similar position, diseases of the

chest are very common ; and furs are much worn at all times of the year, from the danger of sudden chills.

The district, comprising this plain and that of Perlepe, was called in ancient times Pelagonia, and this name is still used to designate the bishopric of Bitolia.² The site of Monastir itself was probably occupied by Heraclæa, which was one of the principal cities on the line of the Egnatian Way. The Pelagonian plain was one of the primitive seats of the Macedonian race, and, as Mr. Grote has remarked,³ formed a territory better calculated to nourish and to generate a considerable population, than the less favoured home, and smaller breadth of valley and plain, occupied by Epirots or Illyrians. In this way a hardy yet thriving race was developed which had in it the germs of a great nation. In the same district is laid the scene of the story which Herodotus has given of the foundation of the Macedonian monarchy, and which, from its quaint and graphic character, deserves to be introduced here. How far it contains historical elements, we cannot say ;⁴ but, as it stands, it bears a singular resemblance to those Popular Tales which since Grimm's time have been recognised as the heritage of the peasantry in every country of Europe. The three brothers, the youngest of whom is the wisest and the

² The derivation of the modern name Bitolia is doubtful. Boué suggests that it is derived from the Albanian word *vittolja*, a “dove,” as the place was inhabited by the Skipetars before the Slaves. This he would connect with the corresponding name of Peristeri, given to the mountain which rises above (‘Recueil d’Itinéraires,’ i. p. 257). Von Hahn, however, prefers to derive it from the Slavonic *abitavati*, “to inhabit,” and considers it a translation of the name Monastir. This latter name originated in the monastery of Bukova itself (Hahn, ‘Reise von Belgrad nach Salоник,’ p. 115).

³ ‘History of Greece,’ iv. p. 15.

⁴ The historical side of the story is well given by Von Gutschmid, in the ‘Symbola Philologorum Bonnensium.’

most successful—the enigmatical conversation about the sunshine—the sudden swelling of the river to save the fugitives—are all features commonly found in this class of stories; in addition to which the general cast of the narrative is such as cannot fail to suggest a close resemblance to the Popular Tales to one accustomed to study this branch of literature. So that we need have no hesitation in finding a relationship between it and ‘Cinderella,’ ‘The Sleeping Beauty,’ ‘Jack and the Bean-stalk,’ and the innumerable other stories which a careful search is continually bringing to light.

“Three brothers, descendants of Temenus, fled from Argos to the Illyrians; their names were Gauanes, Aëropus, and Perdiccas. From Illyria they went across to Upper Macedonia, where they came to a certain town called Lebæa. There they hired themselves out to serve the king in different employments. One tended the horses; another looked after the cows; while Perdiccas, who was the youngest, took charge of the smaller cattle. In those early times poverty was not confined to the people; kings themselves were poor, and so here it was the king’s wife who cooked the victuals. Now, whenever she baked the bread, she always observed that the loaf of the labouring boy Perdiccas swelled to double its natural size. So the queen, finding this never fail, spoke of it to her husband. Directly that it came to his ears, the thought struck him that it was a miracle, and boded something of no small moment. He therefore sent for the three labourers, and told them to be gone out of his dominions. They answered, ‘They had a right to their wages; if he would pay them what was due, they were quite willing to go.’ Now it happened that the sun was shining down the chimney into the room where they were; and the king, hearing them talk of wages, lost his wits, and said, ‘There are the wages which you deserve; take that—I give it you!’ and pointed, as he spoke, to the sunshine. The two elder brothers, Gauanes and Aëropus, stood aghast at the reply, and did nothing; but the boy, who had a knife in his hand, made a mark with it round the sunshine on the floor of the room, and said, ‘O king! we accept thy payment.’ Then he received the light of the sun three times into his bosom, and so went away, and his brothers went with him.

“When they were gone, one of those who sat by told the king what the youngest of the three had done, and hinted that he must have had

some meaning in accepting the wages given. Then the king, when he heard what had happened, was angry, and sent horsemen after the youths to slay them. Now there is a river in Macedonia to which the descendants of the Argives offer sacrifice as their saviour. This stream swelled so much, as soon as the sons of Temenus were safe across, that the horsemen found it impossible to follow. So the brothers escaped into another part of Macedonia, and took up their abode near the place called ‘the Gardens of Midas, son of Gordias.’ In these gardens there are roses which grow of themselves, so sweet that no others can come near them, and with blossoms that have as many as sixty petals apiece. It was here, according to the Macedonians, that Silenus was made a prisoner. Above the gardens stands a mountain called Bermius, which is so cold that none can reach the top. Here the brothers made their abode, and from this place, by degrees, they conquered all Macedonia.”⁵

We soon discovered that the monastery at which we were staying, though built in many respects like the smaller Greek monasteries, was such only in name. It has, it is true, a central church, and a warden and one monk to perform the services ; but the buildings round the court are intended, not for monastic cells, but for places of meeting for the members of different guilds of tradesmen in Monastir, who come here to hear service, and afterwards to feast and make merry, on the festival days of their patron saints. The great monastery of St. Naum, near the southern end of the lake of Ochrida, is a similar institution. These guilds, which are found among the Christians in many of the cities of Turkey, and are governed by statutes of their own, and presided over by a judge elected by the body, correspond very closely to our corporations of the Middle Ages. We were lodged in a room belonging to the Worshipful Company of

⁵ ‘Herod.,’ viii. 137-138 (Rawlinson’s translation). The gardens here spoken of are the rich and fertile district in the neighbourhood of Verria (Berrhea), to the south of Vodena. What is said of the roses reminds us of the name of that flower in modern Greek, *triantaphyllum*, or “the flower of thirty petals.”

Greengrocers. The sitting-room occupied by Mr. Calvert and his wife was formed by an angle of the wide open gallery which here runs round the building, and was screened from the sun by a canvas covering extended from the wall to the balustrade of the gallery. The history of the old warden was a very sad one : he was in the last stage of a decline, brought on by a melancholy of several years' standing, in consequence of the death of his brother, who was wantonly murdered by a Turk, in the open streets, by his side. The murderer, after a few months' imprisonment at Constantinople, again walks the streets of Monastir, and from time to time comes to the monastery with others to levy black mail, and require entertainment from the brother of his victim. But these things are of common occurrence. It was revolting to hear, from the best authority, of the outrages which the Christians in these parts are continually suffering at the hands of the Turks. Besides the extortion carried on by government agents in the collection of the taxes, murders, assaults, robberies, and pillage, are constantly happening. The Turks have no occupation, either agricultural or mechanical ; they support themselves by stealing from their neighbours. One seeming improvement has been introduced of late years, in the taxes not being farmed ; but the unscrupulousness and cupidity of the collectors remain the same. The people, in consequence of this, are afraid to show any outward signs of prosperity lest they should be despoiled. And so great is the fanaticism of the Mahometans, that until a very few years ago no Christian woman, not even a Frank lady, was allowed to appear in the streets unveiled. The wife of the Austrian consul, who was the first representative of Western Europe that appeared here, was for some time obliged to wear a veil.

One story that we heard at this time, which was well authenticated, is a remarkable instance of retribution. In the neighbourhood of Elbassan, in Central Albania, where the dearth had lately been so great as almost to amount to a famine, a young Mahometan, who was reduced to excess of want, went out foraging by night. He met a man driving a mule laden with sacks, and having shot him, according to the custom of the country, brought home his store of grain. The next night he went off to get it ground, and his father, desiring to emulate his son's success, started also to try his hand on a similar exploit. He also shot his man, and brought home the captured sacks. On examining them, he found that they were his own, and that the victim was his son.

The Bulgarians, who form the largest element in the Christian population from Salonica to the confines of Albania, are a very interesting people, and are highly spoken of for industry and honesty. They are the most numerous of all the nationalities inhabiting European Turkey, and are estimated at between five and six millions. There can be no doubt that the original Bulgarians were of Turanian descent, and near relations, if not actual descendants, of Attila's Huns; but after their settlement in Bulgaria Proper, on the Danube, they became so intermingled with the Slavonian inhabitants of that country that they adopted their language. A large number of them seem to have emigrated into Western Macedonia before the ninth century, and there, in all probability, received a further infusion of Slavonic blood. The traces of this are very evident in the present appearance of the people; for the Tartar type of face, which generally is remarkable for its permanence, has here for the most part disappeared. Notwithstanding this, you will not often find a people with such well-marked

characteristics. They have straight noses, high cheekbones, flat cheeks, and very commonly light eyes ; their complexions are frequently almost swarthy from exposure to the sun, but the children are generally fair. The dress of the women is peculiar ; the principal garment is a long coat, open in front, reaching nearly to the feet ; besides this and an under garment, there is a broad belt, elaborately embroidered, and an apron of bright colours ; they wear a veil, somewhat resembling the Turkish *yashmak*, but not so closely drawn. The national instrument is a small flute, the Arcadian sound of which may sometimes be heard in the wild unfrequented valleys.

At an early period of Byzantine history this people was one of the most dreaded foes of the Greek empire. They first appeared on the further side of the Danube at the end of the fifth century, and not long after this their invasions commenced. Two centuries and a half later, in the time of the Iconoclastic emperors, we find their power so greatly increased that it required all the energy and military talents of Constantine Copronymus (A.D. 757) to keep them at bay, and on one occasion they carried their ravages up to the walls of Constantinople. As might be expected from a rude and needy people settled in the neighbourhood of an old civilization, their inroads were continually renewed, and from these they usually returned home laden with plunder. In the beginning of the ninth century their king, Crumn, was an able and warlike leader. After a protracted struggle with the emperor Nicephorus I., he defeated and slew that prince, who had invaded his territory, in a night attack on his camp, and converted his skull into a drinking-cup for his table. Until the end of his life Crumn was continually at war with the two succeeding emperors, and proved a terrible scourge to the provinces

of Thrace and Macedonia, from the merciless way in which he ravaged the country, sacked the cities, and carried away the inhabitants into captivity. He seems, however, to have exhausted his own people in these wars, for after his death they remained tranquil for some time. The next occasion on which we hear of them was one of considerable importance. In the year 861 the country on the southern side of the Balkan range was ceded to them, and received from them the name of Zagora. At the same time the Bulgarian monarch Bogoris embraced Christianity, which had been introduced into his palace by his sister, who had been carried as a prisoner to Constantinople and educated there, and had afterwards been restored to her native country. At his baptism the Emperor Michael became his sponsor, and it was pretended that the cession of territory had been made as a baptismal donation. By the influence of Bogoris, who was a wise and beneficent prince, his entire people was converted to Christianity and advanced in civilization. He ultimately resigned his kingdom to his son Simeon, and retired into a monastery, where he died.

The Bulgarians had now become a commercial nation, and were the most advanced in the arts of life of all the northern barbarians. Placed as they were between the Byzantine empire and the German and Scandinavian tribes, they became the medium for supplying the latter with the manufactures and gold of the former, and with the products of Asia. The trade thus caused was a source of great profit to them, but also involved them in war with Constantinople. Thus the peace which had been concluded with Bogoris was brought to an end, during the reign of his son, by the rapacity of the Greeks, who farmed the customs of the empire, and in so doing

seriously interfered with the traders. In the wars that succeeded, Simeon inflicted the greatest injury on his opponents, destroying the fruit trees and burning the houses of the peasantry, and treating his captives with merciless cruelty. When peace was re-established (A.D. 923), the treaty was made under the very walls of Constantinople, on which occasion the Greeks were astonished at the splendid array of the body-guard of the Bulgarian monarch, and their steady discipline. One of the stipulations of this treaty is of great ecclesiastical importance, viz., that it required the public acknowledgment of the independence of the Bulgarian Church, and the official recognition of the Archbishop of Dorostylon as Patriarch of Bulgaria, both by the Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople. In the reign of Nicephorus Phocas the Russians, who had not long before appeared on the scene of action, were invited by the Greeks to invade Bulgaria; this they did in the year 968, under the command of their chief Swatoslaf, and so effectually crushed the Bulgarians that the emperor was obliged himself to come to the aid of that people, in order to save his own territory from falling a prey to the new comers. When, at last, the Russians were finally defeated and expelled by the skill and military tactics of John Zimisces, the Bulgarians for a time became subject to the Eastern empire.

It was shortly after this, however, that their period of greatest glory commenced. Towards the end of the tenth century, while the Byzantine authorities were occupied with a rebellion at home, their chief, Samuel, a man of great vigour and ability, proclaimed himself king, and not only recovered the dominions of his predecessors, but extended his conquests over Macedonia and Thessaly, and made plundering excursions into Greece and the

Peloponnese. Finding that the plains of Bulgaria were unfavourable to him as a scene of war, on account of the superior discipline of the Imperial forces, he transferred his seat of government to Achrida (now Ochrida), on the lake of the same name, in the midst of the mountains to the west of Monastir ; at the same time he transferred thither the Bulgarian patriarchate, and from thenceforth that place became the capital, and the focus of their national associations. Before long the wisdom of his choice was shown, for he made himself master of all the country which now forms the centre of European Turkey, reaching from the Ægean to the Adriatic, and commanding the principal lines of communication, so that his dominions became as extensive as the European portion of the Byzantine empire. The rise of this new kingdom, however, coincided with the culminating period of Byzantine greatness, and Samuel found a worthy rival in Basil II., who from his subsequent victories obtained the title of “Slayer of the Bulgarians.” In the year 1002 this emperor defeated the Bulgarian king under the walls of Scopia (Uskiub), on the Vardar, when he was returning from a successful inroad into the heart of Thrace. Again in 1014, in a battle that took place in the upper valley of the Strymon, by means of a manœuvre which enabled him to attack his enemy at once in front and in the rear, Basil inflicted a crushing blow on the Bulgarians ; and when that prince, with frightful inhumanity, blinded all his prisoners, and sent them home in that condition, Samuel was so horrified at the sight that he died of rage and grief two days afterwards. Within four years from this time the Bulgarian power was at an end, and the whole people had submitted to the dominion of the Greek empire. Once again they rose to importance, when, at the end of the twelfth century, they joined with the Wal-

lachs in establishing what was called the Bulgaro-Wallachian kingdom ; but as this event more properly belongs to Wallachian history, we will defer speaking of it until we have an opportunity of giving an account of that people. After the Turkish conquest the Bulgarians do not reappear as a nation ; they became the agricultural population of a large part of Turkey, and have borne their hard lot with passive resignation. Though endowed with a stubborn nature, they have shown themselves too unimpressible to take part in any of the movements which have affected the Turkish empire.⁶

It may be well here to add a few words as to the recent movement in the Bulgarian Church. It will be remembered that in the spring of 1861 we received accounts of an agitation on the part of that church to free themselves from the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, and that some of the leaders in that movement seceded to the Church of Rome, while others tried to fraternize with various Protestant bodies. The explanation of their hatred of what they call “Fanariote influence,” which at Constantinople was generally ascribed to political causes, we easily discovered in the country itself. It has all along been the policy of the Greeks to keep the Bulgarian Church in subjection, so that traces of an antagonism to their ecclesiastical rule may be found as early as the tenth century ;⁷ and in this they have in later times been supported by the Turks, whose aim it has been to use the Greek Church as an instrument for keeping in order the other subject races. In consequence of this, Greek bishops have been appointed to Bulgarian dioceses ; many of the priests also are Greeks, and the Greek language, of

⁶ Thunmann, ‘Untersuchungen,’ p. 275, foll.; Finlay, ‘Byzantine Empire.’

⁷ Ibid., ii. p. 81.

which the people do not understand a word, has been, until lately, universally in use in the services. I know of one instance (I dare say it is not an uncommon one) where even the priest, a Bulgarian, did not know a word of Greek, and had only learnt to read the Greek letters, so that he recited the service without knowing the meaning of the words. In a few places, as, for instance, in the neighbourhood of Ochrida, permission has been given within the last few years to introduce the Slavonic tongue, probably in consequence of considerable pressure ; but these are quite exceptions. During the summer of 1861 a pamphlet of some learning, though tediously prolix, was put out by the Secretary of the Constantinopolitan Synod, to review the history of the Bulgarians in their relation to the Greek Church, and to show the groundlessness of their pretensions and complaints. The writer urges that the Bulgarians form but a small part of the population of Western Macedonia ; he says that many of the people are only Greeks who speak Bulgarian (*Граїкoi Βουλγαροφωνoῦntes*) ; and even goes so far as to assert that the physical appearance and customs of the Bulgarians in these parts show them to be originally Greek, and not Bulgarian—all which statements can be contradicted by one who has travelled in the country. He comments severely on the theories of M. Fallmerayer (ο *Γερμανὸς Φαλμεράνερος*), who maintains, somewhat paradoxically, that there is no Greek blood in the veins of the modern Greeks ; he inveighs against the presumption of those who would drive out from this country the language of Homer, Demosthenes, and Plato, yea, of the Gospel—the language of civilization, “which not only teaches forms of speech, but also enlightens the mind, and moulds the affections, and informs the will :” and then, addressing himself to the Wallachians and other

inhabitants of the district, with a view, apparently, to "divide and conquer," he warns them that the Bulgarians are endeavouring to get the ecclesiastical superiority over them, and that by submitting they will bring about their *Bulgarisation* ($\tauὴν ἐκβούλγαρωσιν ἀντῶν$). Moreover, he tells the Bulgarians that it is unreasonable for them to desire bishops of their own race, because distinctions of race have been destroyed by the Gospel: they ought only to ask for men who can speak Slavonic, and this, he says, all their bishops can do; and so far are the bishops from trying to Hellenize others, that they become de-nationalized and Bulgarized themselves. Some of these arguments it is impossible to read without a smile. But the real cause of all this indignation is the desire which the Bulgarians have expressed to be free from the Patriarch of Constantinople, and their claim to have a Patriarch of their own, as they had until less than a century ago. For a time the movement is brought to a standstill: it is to be hoped, however, that if it does not ultimately bring about the independence of the Bulgarian Church, it will at all events remove many of the abuses by which it is now afflicted. Most of those persons who joined the Church of Rome have already returned, since they found how galling a yoke the Pope would lay upon them. But it is striking to see in this instance, as in others with which we are more familiar, the attraction exercised by a great name and a central idea.

In going from Monastir to Ochrida two passes have successively to be crossed, between which a broad and deep valley intervenes. The first of these is through the mountains which rise directly behind Monastir, and among which the lofty peak of Peristeri is the most conspicuous object. As we emerged from the town in this direction, we passed through a cemetery, and, on reaching

the open country, found ourselves on the right bank of the Dragor, a tributary of the Czerna, which flows through the place. On our way, as we followed this stream upwards, we met a number of horses bearing charcoal and skins, the produce of the country, to the town. For some distance the mountain-sides were dotted with villages, but in the upper regions the country was barren and uninteresting, though the slopes in the neighbourhood of our track were covered with ferns. The summit reaches the height of about 3000 feet above the sea. Descending on the other side into the valley-plain of Presba, we stopped a short time, during the heat of the day, at the village of Resna ; and then again ascended the second mountain chain by a steep winding path amid the bright foliage of dwarf oaks and beeches, with striking views of the Lake of Presba at the southern end of the plain, encased on three sides by finely-broken mountains, which loomed dimly forth through the warm haze. The Bulgarian peasants who accompanied our horses called this piece of water *Edcro*, that is *jeszero*, the Slavonic word for "lake." As seen from this point, Mount Peristeri is a magnificent object, as its grey peak towers far above everything else, rising on the southern side of the heights we had just been crossing.

The reader will have already discovered what is the general conformation of the country in this part of Turkey—high parallel mountain chains running from north to south, and separated from one another here and there by fertile plains, or lakes of considerable size, such as those of Ostrovo, Presba, and Ochrida. The mountains which we are now ascending form the central ridge, and are a northerly continuation of the Pindus range, which divides Thessaly from South Albania. Their ancient name was Scardus. Many of the trees were cut down in

this part, and thin wreaths of smoke curling up from among the dense woods served to show that charcoal burning was going on. When we reached the summit of the pass, the elevation of which is nearly the same as that of the former one,⁸ we rode for some time through upland glades and pastures, meeting no living creatures except a few magnificent shaggy shepherd's dogs, who did their best to oppose our passage; and then, after descending for half an hour, came in sight of the Lake of Ochrida, the largest of the lakes of Greece and Turkey. It lay far below us, a broad expanse of calm water, reaching far away to the south; its western shore was bounded by fine mountains, three ranges of which could be seen rising one behind the 'other; at its northern end, over which we were looking, was an alluvial plain; and rising out of this, and projecting into the lake, a rocky height, on which stands the old town and castle of Ochrida, while the new town nestles close at its foot. The descent of the mountain on this side is long and steep, and night was beginning to close in before we reached the plain; but our baggage-horse and dragoman were far behind; so, after waiting in vain for an hour, and fearing that they might have taken some other path, we stumbled on through pitchy darkness in the direction of the city. When we reached it, it was silent as the grave, and we made our way through one long wet street until we met a Turkish guard, who directed us to a khan. Fortunately for us, the Bulgarian khanji could speak a little Greek, for Greek holds the same position in all these parts that French does in Western Europe, being the language of travellers and communication. Stepping over the bodies of prostrate muleteers, we

⁸ Boué, 'Recueil d'Itinéraires,' i. pp. 261-2.

were conducted to a filthy room, furnished, as usual, with two rush mats, on which, however, we were soon fast asleep. Of the rest of our party we heard nothing till the following morning, when our dragoman appeared, having gone the round of the khans of the town in search of us. As we suspected, they had lost their way in the dusk of the evening, and when at last they reached the town, had found their way to another and somewhat superior place of entertainment, to which we afterwards removed.

The name of Ochrida, or, as it was formerly called, Achrida, is derived, not as some writers have said, from the Greek *ἄκρος*, as being built on a height, but from the Slavonic *ahar*, “a court,” since it was once the residence of the Bulgarian monarchs. The city is said to contain some 15,000 inhabitants, the Mahometans and Christians being about in equal numbers. The Mahometans are mostly Albanian, of the Gheg tribe; for though the name Turk is often heard throughout Albania, it only means Mahometan; with the exception of the pashas and a few officials, hardly any Ottomans are found westward of this point. The Christians are Bulgarians, and these too cease with the mountains which bound the lake on the west. The lake, which was the Lacus Lychnitis of classical times, may be said to form the division between Western Macedonia and Central Albania. In a geographical point of view, indeed, the Scardus might more accurately be regarded as the boundary, but the Slavonic population in this part overruns its natural limit.

In the morning we went up into the upper city, which is inhabited by Christians, to see the metropolitan church, which we found to be situated within the precincts of the

Archbishop's palace. (One of the early Archbishops of Achrida was Theophylact, the author of the commentary.) As I was looking about for some one to get me the key, a person, whom I afterwards found to be the Archbishop's secretary, beckoned me to come into his room, where he seated me by a window commanding a superb view over the lake, until he had disposed of a number of judicial cases which he was engaged in trying. The Archbishop himself was absent, which is not unfrequently the case with these dignitaries. When these were finished, he conversed with me for some time in Greek, and during the conversation surprised me not a little by asking, "Is your honour a Christian?" On my answering in the affirmative, he entered on a detailed account of the sufferings of the Christians, which seemed to be caused in no slight degree by the unsettled state of the country, as they could not venture two miles outside the city without the danger of being pillaged. After this he showed us over the church, a Byzantine edifice of some antiquity, unpretending in its architecture, but containing some objects of singular curiosity. On passing behind the Iconostase, or altar-screen, I observed in a niche a wooden statue of St. Clement of Rome, to whom the church is dedicated; and as if to distinguish the saint from St. Clement of Ochrida, there is a picture behind the altar, with the inscription, "Saint Clement, Pope of Rome" (*ὁ ἄγιος Κλήμης Παπᾶς Ρώμης*). Besides this, there was lying in one part a large wooden crucifix, the figure of Our Lord being in low relief, and the workmanship and ornaments Byzantine. I was quite taken aback by seeing these objects, never having met with anything of the kind in a Greek church before, except a small figure in ivory

affixed to the valuable cross which I have described as being preserved at the monastery of Xeropotamu on Mount Athos, and a reputed gift of the Empress Pulcheria. I asked the secretary and the priest, who accompanied us, whether they were in accordance with their rites? "No," they replied; "such things were nowhere allowed by the orthodox communion." "Then how did they come there?" They did not know; only they had been there from very ancient times; they had no idea that they came from abroad. Since that time I have searched in vain for any trace in history of lasting Roman Catholic influence in these parts. At the time of the Fourth Crusade, when the Latins occupied Constantinople, a Roman Catholic bishopric was established for a time at Castoria, between this and Salonica; and in northern Albania most of the Christians are Roman Catholics: the Normans also passed by this place on more than one occasion, when on their way from Durazzo to attack the Eastern empire: but the Byzantine workmanship of the crucifix, and the fact that these objects have been spared at all, point to a friendly and permanent influence; and of such an influence of the Church of Rome on the Bulgarians of these parts I can discover no sign. It seems more probable that they have come down from a still earlier period, not much later than the original conversion of the Bulgarian nation by Methodius, who together with his brother Cyril evangelized the Slavonians in the ninth century: and their story in connexion with St. Clement and with these parts is so interesting, that I am tempted for a moment to refer to it. I may mention, in passing, that there does not exist in English, as far as I am aware, any sufficient account of this episode in ecclesiastical history, though it has

been carefully treated in German by Dobrowsky;⁹ and the various legends about it,—Greek, Latin, Moravian, and Bulgarian,—are so curious, that it would be a most interesting subject for a monograph from an experienced hand.

It appears that Cyril was first sent from Constantinople as a missionary to the Chazars, a tribe inhabiting the neighbourhood of Cherson, at the mouth of the Dneiper. Here it was revealed to him that he should recover the body of St. Clement of Rome, who, according to the story given in the ‘Clementine Epitome,’ had been banished to this place by Trajan, and, in consequence of the numerous conversions which he made, had been thrown into the sea by the heathen, with an anchor round his neck.¹⁰ After praying and fasting, Cyril was enabled to go down into the sea, which retired before him, and brought up the body, which had been preserved entire in a submarine tomb: the head was sent at a later period to Kieff, in Russia, where we are told that in the year 1146 it was placed on the head of the Metropolitan of Russia as a form of consecration,¹¹

⁹ ‘Cyrill und Methodius,’ Prag., 1823; and ‘Mährische Legende,’ Prag., 1826. These works are to be found in the ‘Abhandlungen’ of the Bohemian ‘Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften,’ vols. viii. and i. (*neue folge*) respectively.

¹⁰ The legend of St. Clement has an especial interest at the present time, because, in the excavations which have been lately made underneath the ancient church of San Clemente, at Rome, a still older church has been discovered, the walls of which are covered with frescoes, representing the circumstances connected with his death. It is on account of the “sea-change into something rich and strange” which the martyr’s memory has passed through, that he was adopted as the representative of the Sea-Kings, and hence became the patron saint of Denmark and Norway.

¹¹ Stredowsky, ‘Sacra Moraviæ Historia.’ There is something very striking in the partition of the relics of this ancient saint between the Eastern and Western Churches, just at the time of the Great Schism.

while the rest of the body, together with the anchor and chain, was conveyed by Cyril to Constantinople. In the meanwhile his brother Methodius,¹² a monk and painter, had been converting the Bulgarians; and not long after, the two set out on a mission to the Moravians and Bohemians, carrying with them St. Clement's remains; on which occasion, as is well known, the Bible was translated into the Slavonic tongue, and the Cyrillic alphabet invented. The fact that Cyril was superior to the prejudice that ordinary languages are unfit for sacred and literary uses, a feeling which caused even Dante a severe struggle before composing his 'Divine Comedy' in the vulgar tongue, and to which Cyril, as a Greek, and therefore accustomed to regard everything "barbarian" with the greatest abhorrence, must have been especially alive, proves him at once to have been a very great man. In Moravia they were brought into contact with the Roman Catholic clergy, and from some unexplained cause—whether it was from Cyril's having been in former years an opponent of Photius, who was now Patriarch, or because, being monks, and one of them a painter, they were scandalised by the iconoclastic spirit rise at Constantinople,¹³ or whether political changes in Moravia made it more probable that they would be able to further Christianity by alliance with the Western nations, and they were large-hearted enough

¹² There is some doubt whether Methodius, the converter of the Bulgarians, and the brother of Cyril, are the same. The question is discussed in the 'Acta Sanctorum' for March 9.

¹³ Dean Milman says ('Latin Christianity,' ii. p. 352) that an "untraced connexion had grown up between these Greek missionaries in Slavonia and the Roman See (the monks were probably image-worshippers, and so refused obedience to iconoclastic Constantinople);" and, in a note, "Methodius, it must be remembered, was a painter."

to ignore minor differences¹⁴—they connected themselves with the Roman church, though at the same time retaining many of the customs of the Greek church, and saying mass in the vulgar tongue. In consequence of these irregularities they were summoned to Rome by Pope Nicholas I., and were received with great honour on account of their bringing with them St. Clement's body. On this occasion, according to the legend,—which, like so many others, embodies a very grand truth,—when the Pope and conclave were deliberating on the question whether the church services might be held in the vulgar tongue, their doubts were silenced by a supernatural voice, suddenly heard in the midst of them, exclaiming, “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.”¹⁵

Cyril resigned his office, and remained as a monk at Rome, where he died, and was buried in the basilica of his patron saint.¹⁶ Methodius returned as archbishop to Moravia, where, however, he was strongly opposed by the western clergy on account of what seemed to them his nonconformity in maintaining practices different from what they themselves observed. After his death, when a persecution was raised against his followers in Moravia, Clement of Ochrida, one of the most distinguished of the followers of the two brothers, retired to his native city, where he founded a monastery, and devoted himself to

¹⁴ Neander says ('Church History,' v. p. 435):—“When afterwards it so happened [that the Moravian princes, induced by political changes, entered into a closer connexion with the German Empire and the Western Church, this step, taken at a time when the schism between the Greek and Latin Churches first broke out, was naturally followed by an entanglement of ecclesiastical relations. Cyril and Methodius proved themselves to be men who placed a higher value on the interests of Christianity than on those of a particular church.”

¹⁵ ‘Acta Sanctorum,’ March 9, p. 16 E.

¹⁶ Stredowsky, p. 394.

teaching the Bulgarians, who before this time had overspread this part of the country. He had now returned to the Eastern communion, and before his death became bishop of Belitza, the first episcopal see established in these parts. His influence appears to have been deservedly great, from the zeal with which he is said to have forwarded the improvement of his people, not only by giving oral instruction, but also by composing simple homilies for the use of the priests, by introducing the fine arts, and building beautiful churches, and by improving horticulture through the introduction of new fruit trees.¹⁷ To him we may trace the establishment of the *cultus* of St. Clement of Rome; and it is not impossible that the statue of the saint and the crucifix may date from that period. Not long after this they would have been absolutely forbidden, and nothing but the veneration entertained for objects of antiquity would have caused them to be spared.

Before leaving this subject, it will be well to notice what in reality is one of the most puzzling points in ecclesiastical history, and one which continually presents itself to the mind of the traveller in these countries—the growth of the distinction between statues and pictures in

¹⁷ This we learn, together with many other interesting details, from a life of Clement of Ochrida, composed by one of his pupils, and preserved at the monastery of St. Naum, at the southern end of the lake, where it was discovered, and published at Vienna in 1802. Neander, who would appreciate such a book at its full value—as giving an insight into the inner life and spirit of the age—speaks of it as very rare. He regards it as the work of Archbishop Theophylact, whose name is prefixed to it; but this is a mistake, as Theophylact lived considerably later, and his name must have been attached to it subsequently, in order to enhance its value. It has since been re-published at Vienna, under the editorship of F. Miklosich, with the title ‘Vita S. Clementis, Episcopi Bulgarorum’ (*see* his preface on the authorship). It contains, however, no information as to the external relations of the Church at Ochrida.

the Eastern Church. It is well known that that communion at the present day proscribes statues (*ἀγάλματα*), while pictures, or icons (*εἰκόνες*), are universally revered. In saying this, I do not mean to imply that the idolatrous worship of such objects is enjoined or encouraged as such, for neither is that the case in the Roman Church ; in one, as much as in the other, the *theory* is, that the real objects of veneration are the persons or ideas which they suggest to the mind, though in *practice* it is certain that amongst the uneducated, in a large number of cases, the worship is offered to the thing itself. But anyhow, the distinction between the views of the Eastern and Western Churches is broadly marked, in that the former reprobates the use of statues, while the latter advocates it. When talking to one of the more intelligent of the monks of Athos on this subject, I was assured by him that the distinction between statues and icons was drawn by the Sixth and Seventh General Councils ; to which he added, that the icon merely served for a likeness or remembrance of a person, while the statue expressed beauty and caused sensual gratification. In the first of these statements he was mistaken ; all through the iconoclastic controversy statues were the objects of attack and defence just as much as pictures, and in the acts of the Fourth Synod of Constantinople, in 869, no such distinction is made. The change was brought about very gradually ; so much so, that no trace remains to us of the steps by which it came to pass. But the latter part of the monk's statement is valuable, because it presents to us, in a Greek Christian of the present day, the same feeling which was really at work from the first, namely, an instinctive objection to a material image. In the only passage, as far as I know, in any ecclesiastical historian, where this subject has been

philosophically treated, this idea has been brought prominently forward. Speaking of the time succeeding the period of Iconoclasm, Dean Milman says—"To the keener perception of the Greeks there may have arisen a feeling that, in its more rigid and solid form, the Image was more near to the Idol. At the same time, the art of sculpture and casting in bronze was probably more degenerate and out of use ; at all events, it was too slow and laborious to supply the demand of triumphant zeal in the restoration of the persecuted Images. There was, therefore, a tacit compromise ; nothing appeared but painting, mosaics, engraving on cups and chalices, embroidery on vestments. The renunciation of Sculpture grew into a rigid passionate aversion. The Greek at length learned to contemplate that kind of more definite and full representation of the Deity, or the saints, with the aversion of a Jew or a Mohammedan."¹⁸ What has been said about statues naturally applies to the crucifix also ; and this perhaps may have been disused all the more easily, because it had not long been introduced, for the crucifix did not exist until after the seventh century.¹⁹

¹⁸ 'Latin Christianity,' vi p. 413.

¹⁹ See Guericke's 'Ecclesiastical Antiquities,' p. 116.

CHAPTER IX.

OCHRIDA TO ELBASSAN.

The Menzil — Primitive Boats — The Drin at Struga — Roman Milestone — Bulgarian School — Kukus — Wild Mountain Road — Elbassan — Concealed Treasures — Illtreatment of Women — Value set on Water — The Albanians — Their Origin — Character — Riddles and Superstitions — Ghegs and Tosks — Albanian Heroes — History of Scanderbeg — Ballad on his Death.

TWO hours' riding along the northern shore of the lake brought us to the town of Struga, which is situated at the place where the Black Drin makes its exit from the lake, from whence it flows first north, and afterwards south-west, and falls into the Adriatic near Alessio, after describing almost a semicircle in its course. We were now travelling by the Menzil or Turkish post, for along the main lines of communication horses are kept in readiness for government officials, and travellers who are provided with a *firman* of the Sultan can use them at three-fifths of the regular charge; they can also impress the horses of the people of the country, if necessary, though we always preferred hiring them from carriers, if they were to be had, as the inconvenience to the peasants is often very great. In this part of Turkey the charge for *menzil* horses is three piastres and a half (about sevenpence) an hour; but this is higher than what is found in some other parts of the country, and a great deal above the ordinary carrier's fare. At the same time the gain is great in respect of speed, as the post-horses are usually good: thus the ordinary "hour" of carriers' pace, which averages about three miles, may be com-

passed into three-quarters of the time. In many other ways a *firman* will be found of great service ; it will secure you a night's lodging, if there is any difficulty ; and on one occasion, when a Turkish guard by the roadside required to see our passports, and demanded *bakshish* for himself, on hearing that we carried a *firman* he instantly lowered his tone, and said he had no wish to inspect it, and did not desire *bakshish* at all.

The scenery of this part of the lake of Ochrida is extremely beautiful, and it is more easy for the traveller to fancy himself in the neighbourhood of the Italian lakes, than in the midst of the wild stern regions of European Turkey. One of the mediaeval travellers compares it to the lake of Gennesaret, and my companion assured me that from the level of the lake, where the distant mountains are hidden from view, the resemblance is striking. Great numbers of waterfowl might be seen near the shore, and huge buffaloes lay revelling in the coolness, and in freedom from the attacks of flies, with their heads just protruded above the surface, and their mouths idly gaping. But the greatest curiosity of these parts are the boats which are used on the lake. These are flat-bottomed vessels, with large logs of wood projecting from their sides to keep them steady in the water ; and in the bow a sort of platform, rising in three steps, for the three rowers, who have their oars all on the same side ; while to counterbalance them another sits in the stern, and steers with an oar on the other side—a mode of progression the disadvantages of which are more apparent than the advantages. Their primitive shape and peculiar arrangement is probably intended to suit them for fishing purposes ; though, when the history of primæval boats comes to be written, those which are found in the remote lakes of Turkey may perhaps be found to belong to a very early type.

At Struga the Drin is crossed by a long wooden bridge, beneath which the full clear stream rushes along in a well-defined bed. As we looked down into it, we could see fish of all sizes swimming about in the water ; and before long we were able to pronounce on their excellence as an article of food, as we purchased for six piastres (one shilling) a fine pink salmon-trout, of four pounds and a half, off which we made a luxurious repast. The trout and salmon-trout which abound in this lake are rarely, if ever, found in the other lakes of Turkey. Struga is the head-quarters of the fishery, in consequence of the fish resorting at certain seasons to the outlet of the lake, where they are caught in immense quantities. A great part of the population of the place is occupied in catching and drying them, and they are exported to all parts of Turkey, being in great request on account of the frequent fasts of the Greek Church. The fishery is the property of the Sultan, and is sublet by him to contractors for a very large sum. The fishing takes place by night, and has been described to me as a very picturesque and exciting scene. These fisheries and the export of their produce must have existed from very early times, for Strabo mentions "the places for drying fish belonging to the lake near Lychnidus."¹ The embankment of the sides of the river, by which the neighbourhood was converted from a marsh into a habitable region, was the work of the Bulgarian prince Samuel, at the time when he made Ochrida the capital of his monarchy. Originally the system of desiccation must have been much more elaborate than what appears at present. Anna Comnena² speaks with warm admiration of the hundred channels into which the water was drawn off, with embankments and covered watercourses

¹ Strabo, vii. 7, § 8.

² xii. p. 371.

communicating with one another, by means of which the river Drin at length was formed. It was from these works that the place obtained its name, for *struga* in Bulgarian signifies “a dike, or arm of a river.”

At one angle of the outer wall of the church at Struga is an ancient Roman milestone, a single cylindrical block rounded at the top, the base of which, and together with it the lower part of the inscription, is now buried in the earth. It was probably one of the milestones of the Egnatian Way, which passed by this place, and is described by Strabo as being “measured by miles and marked by milestones.”³ It is not easy to decipher, but seems almost identical with one in the courtyard of a house at Ochrida, which was copied and communicated to me by my friend Mr. Curtis of Constantinople. As I am not aware that this has been copied before, I give it here. The greater part of the inscription is in Latin, that being the official language, but the distance is given in Greek for the information of the natives. In this respect I believe it is unique, for though many other Roman milestones have been discovered, the inscriptions on all of them are in Latin throughout.⁴

LL CAES
M AVRELIVS ANTONINVS
PIVS FELIX AVGVS
TVS PARTHICVS
MAXIMVS BRET
TANNICVS MAXIMVS
GERMANICVS MAXI
MVS TRIBVNICIAE
POTEST XX IMP III
COS IIII PP PROS RE
STITVIT
ΑΠΟ ΑΤΧΝΙΔΙΩΤ
H

³ Strabo, vii. 4.

⁴ They may be found in Gruter's ‘Inscriptiones Antiquæ,’ pp. 153-159.

Close by the same church is a large school for Bulgarian children. There were 200 of them there, and very clean and orderly they looked as they sat at their desks, very much in the style of an English school. The master was a Bulgarian ; and the children are taught to read and write both Greek and Bulgarian, two days in the week being devoted to the latter language. Here again the intrusive Greek element makes its appearance. I was told that other schools like this have lately sprung up among the Bulgarians of these parts (we saw one ourselves adjoining the metropolitan church at Ochruda), and in many ways they seem desirous of improvement. Before leaving I heard the children read the Gospel, but the room was crammed with people, who had followed me from curiosity to see a Frank, and to discover the reason of my interest in the inscription. Here, however, as elsewhere during this tour, I was not the least molested, nor did I meet with any incivility.⁵

Leaving Struga in the afternoon we bade adieu to the beautiful lake of Ochruda, and crossed the mountains to the west by a low pass over stony ground, the sides of which were partly clad with oak trees, while the track itself was frequently shaded by walnuts. From the head of the ridge we descended into an upland plain, cultivated in places and dotted with trees, from whence again we made our way by a similar pass into a deep valley beyond. All along this part of our route we saw numerous lazy tortoises crawling along by the path : they are

The two first letters of the inscription given in the text are unintelligible ; we should expect it to begin with *Imp. Ces.* Probably the word has been defaced.

⁵ Mr. Lear, who passed through this part of the country twelve years previously, describes himself as being constantly annoyed by the people, and having stones thrown at him. See his ‘Journals of a Landscape Painter.’

common throughout Greece and Turkey. As we descended, night came on, and it was a pretty sight to watch the bright fires in the shepherds' huts or encampments, shining like glowworms all about the mountain side. At the bottom we crossed a narrow picturesque Turkish bridge, which spans the river Skumbi with a single lofty arch undefended by a parapet, and then scrambled along for some way in the darkness to the little village of Kukus, where we found only one small room in the khan. In this some of the natives had already lighted a fire, so that we were thankful to sleep outside under a sort of kiosk, or summer-house, in the open air. Here we were only disturbed by the cats and fowls, which in the early morning skipped playfully over our prostrate bodies.

The next day was spent in winding along the steep mountain sides by an extremely rough track, in and out, and up and down, wherever the steep rocks left room for the path. An Albanian, who was bound in the same direction as ourselves, had now joined our company. At an hour's distance from our night's resting-place we stopped to breakfast at the Khan of Jura, which is one of the cleanest in this part of the country, and in every respect superior to that at Kukus. The room which opens out from the gallery on the upper story has the advantage of a clay floor and stone walls, which, as I have before remarked, are preferable to wood from their not harbouring vermin. The gallery itself, where we had our meal, was fitted all round with hooks for the reception of the long metal-bound guns without one of which an Albanian rarely moves. Some four or five of the owners of such weapons sat and smoked meanwhile, and eyed our proceedings with the utmost curiosity. When we resumed our journey, in many parts we passed

Mahometan cemeteries, placed, as they often are in Turkey, by the road-sides, and the graves marked by ovals of stones ; their number might almost lead one to suppose that these parts were once more thickly populated than they are now. The mountain masses in this district are much more confused than in the country eastward of Ochrida, and the scenery, both here and throughout a great part of the route which I am describing, though it is broad and wild, yet wants grandeur in its mountain forms and delicacy in its outlines. It is quite surprising to read the rapturous epithets in which Mr. Lear indulges in describing it, when one considers how very inferior the landscape is to that of many parts of Europe. For a considerable distance the road was carried along the heights far above the Skumbi, penetrating from time to time into the mountain side to round a gorge, while in some places the slopes below shelved away in a manner not seriously dangerous, but such as to require caution in passing. At last we descended by a steep and tortuous path to that river, the ancient Genusus, a considerable stream, which seems to have taken its modern name from the town of Scampæ on the Via Egnatia. Just at this point, where the Skumbi emerges from the deep valley in which its upper course lies, its waters are spanned by a fine stone bridge of three arches. After fording it a little way below the bridge, and following its stream for some distance through softer scenery, we made our way through a picturesque wooded gorge into a plain, and, after passing a sheikh's tomb with a tiled roof, threaded the olive groves which skirt the city of Elbassan.

This place probably represents the ancient Scampæ, which seems in the middle ages to have been replaced by a city called Albanon, from which the modern name

may be derived.⁶ It holds an important position, as it commands the entrance to the mountain passes, and is the point where the road from Scodra, Durazzo, Berat, and Ochrida, converge. The population is said to be about ten thousand ; by far the greater number of these are Albanian Ghegs, a few of whom are Christians, the rest Mahometans ; besides these there are a few Wallachians, and the keeper of the khan at which we stopped, like so many of his trade, was a Greek. The Christians of this part of Albania are mostly Roman Catholics, but they have been so persecuted of late years that a large number of them have become Mussulmans ; some also have joined the Greek Church ; but the light way in which religion hangs on an Albanian is shown by their proverb, “Where the sword is, the creed is also.” Thus a Mahometan of this race who once accompanied us maintained stoutly that all good Mussulmans ought to drink wine, and that those who abstained were unfaithful to their creed. It is said, however, that the oppressiveness of the conscription for the Turkish army is so great that many who have embraced the religion of the Prophet, would be glad enough to be Christians again.

The old city is square in form, and enclosed within

⁶ The identification of these places is arrived at in the following way. Amongst the many difficulties about the places on the Egnatian Way, arising from the variation of numbers in the Itineraries, one point seems to be well established, namely, the *Trajectus Genusi*, or crossing of the Gennsus, which corresponds with the place where we forded the Skumbi between Kukus and Elbassan. Now both the Jerusalem and Tabular Itineraries give the distance from Trajectus to Scampæ as nine miles, which just corresponds to the distance from the ford to Elbassan. Again, we learn from Anna Comnena (xiii. p. 390), that the mediæval Albanon commanded the passes (*τὰς περὶ τὸν Ἀρβανὸν κλειστόρας*) which lead from the neighbourhood of the lake of Lychnidus to the plains by the coast ; and Farlat, in his ‘Illyricum Sacrum,’ shows that Elbassan was the seat of the bishopric of Albanon. See Hahn’s ‘Albanesische Studien,’ i. pp. 81, 135.

walls, the circuit of which cannot be more than a mile. From the brickwork which is in them they would seem to have been built by the Venetians ; but both the walls and the towers which rise out of them at intervals are in ruins, having been dismantled when the town was taken by Reshid Pasha, in the time of Sultan Mahmoud. This was during the events which succeeded the massacre of the Beys and the fall of Mustapha Pasha, when almost all the fortified places in Albania were destroyed. The suburbs seem now to form the most important part of the place. After paying a visit to the governor of the city, in order to get permission to visit the walls, we climbed up into one of the ruined towers, which commanded a view over the city and surrounding country. The minarets and a large clock-tower, sheathed in glittering tin, form conspicuous objects ; and the trees that environ the houses, among which the fig, cypress, and poplar, are the most remarkable, are more numerous than is usual even in Oriental towns. Among these the towers and walls appear here and there, and around the whole city is a circuit of olive-groves. Close by, to the north, beautiful wooded hills descend into the plain, beyond which rises a high mountain, separating us from Tyrana and the country of Scanderbeg. To the south appears at a great distance, rising above the nearer mountains, the magnificent triple-crested peak of Mount Tomohr, quite a relief in this land of common-place mountain outlines.

We were amused to find that the Governor (or rather his deputy, for he himself was absent, and had left a *locum tenens* to discharge his office) had given strict orders to the guard who accompanied us to the tower in the walls, that we were not on any account to be permitted to find hidden treasures. It is a fixed idea in the minds of all Orientals, that the object of antiquarian

research in their country is to discover hoards of money, and this suspicion has frequently proved a fatal bar in the way of excavations. On a subsequent occasion, when we were performing quarantine on a small island off the shores of the Gulf of Volo, near the Greek and Turkish frontier, an old woman, who was the only permanent inhabitant of the place, firmly believed that we were searching for treasure, and, what is more, that we should probably discover it. She had heard that some time before, a band of robbers (this is a common form for the story to take) had been hunted down by the soldiery on the mainland, and after taking refuge in the island, had concealed their valuables in some secret spot ; and when she saw us reading and writing in the hut we occupied, and in the intervals walking about the rocks, she took it into her head that we were practising magic arts, in order to discover the locality of the deposit. Captain Spratt⁷ has suggested with considerable probability that the frequent occurrence of the name "Jews' Castle" in the islands and on the continent of Greece (there is an Ebraio-Castro on Mount Pelion), may be accounted for by this same idea : that is to say, that ruins are regarded as likely places for finding treasures, and hoarded money is, or was in former times, associated with the Jews. It must have been from some notion of this kind that the name arose, for the fortresses themselves cannot be supposed to have belonged to members of that despised race. In Albania such deposits are supposed to be guarded by snakes or negroes, both of which are mythological representations of the powers below. From time to time these guardians bring them to the daylight, to preserve them from rust and mould ;

⁷ "Travels in Crete," i. p. 315, 316.

and the following story is told of the way in which a shepherd possessed himself of such a treasure. This man once found a snake asleep, coiled round a large heap of gold pieces ; and knowing how to set to work under the circumstances, placed a pail of milk by its side, and waited in a hiding-place until it should wake. It came to pass as he expected. The snake took to the milk with avidity, and drank its fill. On this it returned to the heap of gold, in order to go to sleep again, but the thirst, with which snakes are attacked after drinking milk, prevented it from doing so. It became restless, and moved irresolutely round and round the heap, till the burning within forced it to go in quest of water. The water, however, was far off, and before it had returned, the wary shepherd had carried off the whole heap of gold into a place of safety.⁸

The inside of the city, as you pass through the streets, has a poor appearance, from the low wooden houses with rickety tiled roofs : the bazaars, however, have a gay look, from the bright dresses of their occupants, the red jacket and white kilt being common among the Ghegs, under which they have loose white trousers, girt in below by leggings, while their belts are filled with a variety of richly ornamented arms. Most of the Ghegs are finely made men ; their most marked characteristics are their long necks, long narrow faces, with sharp features, often aquiline, and frequently light hair ; they have a stern look, as if they were a daring, unmerciful people. In the evening we had a visit from a young Turk, who has charge of the telegraph here, on the line between Salonica and Scodra ; for this civilized institution has penetrated even to these barbarous regions, though it is viewed with some

⁸ Hahn, ‘Albanesische Studien,’ i. p. 164.

jealousy by the people of the country, and is kept up with considerable difficulty in the mountain passes during the winter. He was an educated and intelligent man, spoke French, and, as a Government official, was dressed in European costume, except for the fez cap. He expressed great delight at seeing us, for with the exception of a young Greek, his coadjutor, he had seen no traveller, nor any person with whom he could have any ideas in common, during the nine months that he had been stationed there. He spoke bitterly of the barbarism of the natives, and confirmed all that we had heard about the frequency of robberies and murders, and the danger that the people incurred if they ventured a few miles away from the place. "The Mahometans here," he impressively declared, "are not real Mahometans, and the Christians are not real Christians."

As far as this point, our route from Salonica has lain in a north-westerly direction : here we change our course and go south.⁹ It is a proof of the small number of Turks in this part, that the stork, the sacred bird of Turkey, is not found here : their place, however, is supplied by flocks of geese, which are numerous in the neighbourhood of the towns and villages. The country districts leave a most melancholy impression on the mind ; broken bridges, and roads almost impassable on horseback, evidently show neglect and decay ; and here and there your horse will start aside at the sight of a carcase left to rot where it has fallen. The land is mostly covered with tamarisk-bushes, prickly palluria, and ferns. Very little of it is cultivated, owing to the laziness of the people, and the contempt in which agricultural labour is held ; the consequence of which is frequent scarcity of

⁹ On the Egnatian Way, which we leave at this point, see Appendix D.

bread, and there is a sad look of poverty and misery about the lower classes. Much of this has resulted from the centralizing policy of Sultan Mahmoud, which has paralysed the outlying portions of the empire. In ancient times, both this plain, and that of Berat, further to the south, were cultivated at a very early period ; and the prosperity of the Greek colonies of Epidamnus and Apollonia was mainly attributable to their being the points of export respectively for the products of these two fertile regions. It roused one's indignation to see the way in which the women were treated. At one place on the road we passed a number of men, whose wives were walking by their sides, staggering under the weight of huge boxes. The position which the female sex occupies in these parts may, perhaps, be well illustrated by a story which I heard some years ago from the late Sir Henry Ward at Corfu. As he was riding, one day, into the country, he overtook a man who had laden his wife with a very heavy bundle of faggot-sticks ; he remonstrated with him, and said, "Really, my good man, it is too bad that you should load your wife in that way ; what she is carrying is a mule's burden." "Yes, your Excellency," the man replied ; "what you say is quite true, it *is* a mule's burden : but then, you see, Providence has not provided us with mules, and He *has* provided us with women."

Shortly after leaving Elbassan we again forded the Skumbi, which is here a broad and shallow stream. As we proceeded along the plain we met a considerable number of ill-looking fellows, whose occupation was sufficiently shown by their arms and long pipes : guards they may have been, or robbers, or both,—for the line of demarcation between these two classes is sometimes rather fine. It was amusing to notice the curious mixture of

pride and poverty that showed itself in some of these men ; you might see them swaggering along in their dirty fustanellas (white kilt) with erect carriage, twirled moustachios, and the fez set on one side of the head, looking far too fine gentlemen to take any notice of passers-by like ourselves ; yet everything about them betokened the utmost indigence. The way, too, in which an Albanian often carries his gun across the back of his neck, with both arms extended over the two ends, gives an additional nonchalance to his air. Our *surudji*, or postilion, of the day before had warned us strongly against the robbers of these parts, and had stories to tell of the Pasha's baggage having been plundered ; the moral of all this was that we should take guards, but this we always refused to do, unless they were almost forced upon us, because we knew that they would take to their heels if there was any real danger ; but the truth is, that a western European is exposed to very slight risk in travelling here, for he is generally not worth robbing, and if anything happens to him, a considerable stir is sure to be made about it, and some one or other will probably be hanged. Thus the Frank comes to be regarded in the light of a sacred animal, and we used to ride along through the country unarmed and unguarded, with a feeling of security which was hard to analyse.

After some hours' riding we forded the swift stream of the Devol, near a picturesque ruined bridge, two arches of which alone remain, and some way further on made our midday halt by a fountain, in the neighbourhood of which some trees afforded a refreshing shade. Here we had an example of the value that is set on water in these parched countries. The fountain was an erection of masonry built against a bank, with a small spout in the centre of it. (Colonel Leake believes that some of the great foun-

tains of antiquity were of this unpoetical character : certainly that of Aganippe, on the side of Mount Helicon, is now represented by one of this sort, and there is an ancient inscription over it.) We expected to find water here, but alas ! there was none. So, at least, it appeared at first sight, but the *surudji* who accompanied us knew better, for he went up to the spout, and pulled out a small plug of linen or paper, on which there gushed out a thin crystal stream. When we had all drunk, the plug was carefully replaced. It is remarkable to find that in a country where human life is held so very cheap the common interest should cause men to regard water with almost religious respect. Besides this, Orientals generally are very curious on the subject of the quality of their water ; indeed, they are as great connoisseurs of water as any Western epicure can be of wine. Both in Albania and elsewhere I have heard one spring distinguished as *light* ($\epsilon\lambda\alpha\phi\rho\sigma\nu$), and another as *heavy* ($\beta\alpha\rho\upsilon$), where the traveller can distinguish no difference in the taste. No one can doubt, after observing this, that it requires no refinement of criticism to understand Pindar's meaning when he says, "Water is the best of things."

At no great distance from this fountain we arrived at a small village, which forms the boundary between the Gheg and Tosk tribes : here it may be convenient to rest awhile, and before we proceed take a survey of the Albanian nation, and the elements of which it is composed.

The Albanians call themselves Skipetar, and there is considerable evidence to show that they are a nation of great antiquity. The name Arnaout, which is given them by the Turks, is in reality only a corruption of "Albanian." The process of change is distinctly traceable in modern Greek, where the original *Albanites* (pronounced

Alvanites), by a change of liquids becomes *Arvanites*, and thence by a transposition of letters, *Arnavites*, from which the passage is easy to *Arnaout*. Their language, which for a long time was a puzzle to philologists, has of late years been carefully examined by Professor Bopp, who pronounces it to be an independent branch of the Indo-European family. Much of the system of inflexions and many of the words are strikingly similar to Latin and Greek, yet not in such a way as to render it supposable that they have been borrowed from either. In most points, according to Bopp, it can be explained more readily by Sanscrit than by those languages. Dr. Von Hahn, who resided several years among the Albanians, and from whose learned work, 'Albanesische Studien,' many of these remarks are drawn, believes them to be the nearest existing representatives of the Pelasgians. He considers that the great similarities which exist in customs, national constitution, and other points, as well as language, between the Albanians and the early Greeks and Romans, are most naturally accounted for by the supposition that they were all originally of the same race, and that the Albanians, having been little civilised, and from their position little interfered with, have kept these original institutions. The Pelasgians, it is true, have so often been made to serve as the basis of untenable ethnographic theories, that the mention of them is apt to raise a smile; but here there really seems much more to be said than in other cases. For the accounts given us by ancient authors seem to show that the present inhabitants are the same race who held the country in classical times, and imply a close connection between these Epirotic and Illyrian tribes and those of Macedonia, &c.; these statements, taken together with the existence of the great Pelasgian oracle of Dodona in this country, and other facts of the

same nature, seem to lend probability to the theory. There also exists among them an alphabet, apparently of great antiquity, which Hahn believes to have been derived by some of the Pelasgians from the Phœnicians—perhaps from the Phœnician settlements in the north of the Ægean—and to stand in the relation of a sister to the Greek alphabet. But, whatever may be thought of these views, and whether they are reconcilable or not with the results of philological investigation, the subject is one that deserves more attention than it has yet received ; and I cannot but believe that a careful study of the language might throw considerable light on the classical languages.

In respect of character they are described by Finlay¹⁰ as proud, insolent, turbulent, and greedy of gain, but honest and truthful. They are shown to be a clever and imaginative people by their poems and stories, and still more by their riddles, of which Hahn has made a large collection. The following may be taken as favourable specimens ; they are generally propounded in the form of similes, and introduced with the question, “What is this ?”

The field is white, the seed is black ; it is sown with the hand and reaped with the mouth ?—A letter. (How curiously this last clause illustrates the way in which half-educated people spell out a manuscript !)

The father is green, the son is red ?—The blossoming pink.

The monkey dances, while the white cow is milked ?—The spinning-wheel.

Though it is not an ox, it has horns ; though it is not an ass, it has a pack-saddle ; and wherever it goes it leaves silver behind ?—A snail.

¹⁰ ‘History of the Greek Revolution,’ i. p. 38.

What is that which wears the wool inside and the flesh outside?—A tallow candle.

Among the many superstitions which exist in the country, none is more curious than that which relates to men with tails. Of these there are two kinds, one with goats' tails, the other with short horses' tails. Persons endowed with such appendages are always short-made and broad-shouldered, great walkers, and extremely strong.¹¹ The evidence for their existence is so convincing that even the critical German who mentions the belief, is half inclined to think it true. His account is so curious as to be worth extracting:

"This belief," he says, "is, perhaps, more than a popular superstition. One of my cavasses at Yanina (Soliman of Dragoti) maintained, that in his part of the country tailed men of this sort were not uncommon, and that he himself had a tailed cousin, whom in his youth he had often pulled by this gift of Nature when bathing. A much more trustworthy man, Theodoris, who when young had been a cleft on the Pindus, related that in his band there was for several years a short-sized, broad-shouldered man of a very fair complexion, called Captain Jannaki, who was reputed to have a tail. In order to convince themselves of this, once when he was asleep in the middle of the day six of them fell upon him at once, for he was uncommonly strong, and he himself had taken part in this ocular inspection. He distinctly remembered to have seen a goat-like tail about four fingerbreadths long, covered on the outer side with short red bristles. My endeavours to see such an object were in vain; and all the Turkish military surgeons to whom I spoke about it declared the thing to be fabulous, because in their yearly inspection of so many recruits from all parts of the country no such *lusus naturæ* had ever come before them."¹²

Mr. Baring Gould, in his 'Curious Myths of the Middle Ages,' has shown that this superstition was once widely

¹¹ This attribute is connected, I suspect, with the idea of their possessing something of the nature of a brute; for in the Popular Tales of many countries, immense strength is supposed to be the inheritance of a child whose father is a bear.

¹² Hahn, 'Albanesische Studien,' i. pp. 163, 164.

spread throughout Europe, though now it has almost perished. He is also sensible enough to remark, that whatever the evidence, such a conformation of the human body is physiologically impossible.

The total number of Albanians in Turkey, according to the most trustworthy computation, amounts to one million souls;¹³ to these must be added 200,000 in the kingdom of Greece, forming no inconsiderable part of the population of that country; and 85,000, who have settled in the south of Italy and Sicily. The Albanian nation is divided, as I have already mentioned, into the two great tribes of Ghegs and Tosks, the Ghegs inhabiting the country to the north, the Tosks to the south, of the point where we are supposed to be stationed. The name Tosks belongs properly only to the inhabitants of the north bank of the lower Viosa, and is not acknowledged by the other inhabitants of South Albania, to whom it is applied to distinguish them from the Ghegs; until we discovered this we were puzzled by an Albanian, who accompanied us during one part of our journey, describing himself as neither a Gheg nor a Tosk. However, as all who are called by this name belong to the same tribe and speak the same dialect, it will be convenient to use it. Strabo¹⁴ represents the Egnatian Way, which followed the course of the Genusus (Skumbi), as lying on the borders of the Epirotic tribes to the south, and the Illyrian to the north. This division corresponds so closely to the modern line of demarcation of the two tribes, that it seems highly probable that the same races inhabited the country then as now, and that the Tosks correspond to the Epirots, the Ghegs to the Illyrians. The difference between the Gheg and Tosk dialects is as

¹³ Hahn, 'Reise von Belgrad nach Salonik,' p. 210.

¹⁴ Strabo, vii. 4.

great as between German and Danish ; they do not understand one another, or, at most, can only hold communication in the simplest things, and that with difficulty. The distinction of dress is not as marked as has sometimes been represented. The red jacket is generally peculiar to the Ghegs, the white capote to the Tosks ; the Ghegs also frequently wear the short white trouser, which the Tosks do not ; but none of these rules are of invariable application. Another difference also exists in respect of the form which Christianity takes in the two tribes ; speaking roughly, the small number of Ghegs who have maintained their allegiance to the Christian religion are Roman Catholics, while the Christian Tosks are of the orthodox communion. It is probably a consequence of this that the Ghegs, in writing, use the Latin letters, the Tosks the Greek ; for the national alphabet, which I have mentioned above, does not seem to be much used. The hereditary opposition between the tribes is so strong, that when they are serving together in the Turkish army feuds will break out among them, and the Turks have at times turned this animosity to their own advantage, by employing them to put down insurrections in one another's country.

The historical heroes of Albania are Alexander the Great, Pyrrhus, and Scanderbeg ; and in modern times, if it is allowable to mention one so mean in connection with those great names—Ali Pasha. All that is interesting in the history of the country gathers round them ; the rest is a series of temporary conquests and barbarian inroads, the effects of which were transient, and have not permanently influenced either the people themselves or the neighbouring races. Alexander was connected with Albania through his mother Olympias, who was an Epirotic princess : his exploits, however,

belong to universal history, as those of Pyrrhus do to that of Rome. Of the third, Scanderbeg, it may be well to give a brief account, for few warriors have left behind them a fame as lasting, or an admiration as enthusiastic, as that with which this hero is still regarded by his countrymen. George Castriote, for that was his real name, was born in the north of Albania in the year 1404, and as his father had been forced to become tributary to the Turks, he was sent with his three brothers as hostages to Sultan Amurath II. They were lodged in the palace of that prince, and, contrary to an express stipulation made by their father, were educated in the Mahometan religion. The other brothers died early, but George rose in favour with the Sultan, who enrolled him among his guards and appointed him to an important command: his ability and valour were conspicuous at an early age, and in consequence of this he received from the Turks the name of Iskender Bey, or Lord Alexander. After his father's death, when his family possessions were seized and appropriated by Amurath, and a Turkish officer sent to govern them, Scanderbeg conceived the design of regaining them and asserting the independence of his native Albania. He carried out his scheme in the following manner. When engaged in a campaign against Hunniades he entered into a secret correspondence with that commander, and by deserting, at a critical moment, contributed to the defeat of the Turkish army on the plain of Nissa. During the confusion that followed he extorted from the Sultan's secretary a firman, by which the governor of Albania was ordered to surrender to him Croia, the capital of that country, with the command of the neighbouring district. Armed with this mandate he hastened to the spot, and when he had by this means got the

power into his own hands, he threw off the mask, declared himself the enemy of the Mahometans, and was acknowledged by his countrymen as their leader in the struggle for independence. For the remaining twenty-three years of his life he was engaged in almost unceasing hostilities with the Turks, and was renowned for his skill as a general, for the discipline he maintained among his soldiers, and for the prodigies of valour he performed with his own hand. On more than one occasion his enemies penetrated to Croia, but they were as often repulsed, and when Sultan Amurath himself laid siege to that place in 1450, he was forced to retire, and his death, which occurred in the following year, was attributed by some to the mortification caused by that defeat. At one period Scanderbeg retired from the scene, when, having concluded a truce with Mahomet II., he passed over into Italy, at the solicitation of Pope Pius II., to assist the King of Naples against his opponent the Count of Anjou. In consequence of the services which he rendered on that occasion he received large grants of land in Italy, which were occupied in 1460 by a body of immigrants, the first of the numerous colonies which have passed over from Albania into that country. Towards the end of his life he was again engaged in hostilities with his former enemies, and again came off successful. He died at length at Alessio in the 63rd year of his age, and with him the hopes of his countrymen were extinguished. He does not rest among them, for, after he was buried, the Turks tore up his body, and out of his bones constructed amulets, which were supposed to inspire courage into the wearer on the battle-field ; so great was their superstitious reverence for the man who during his long life had kept them at bay and repeatedly defeated them ! But his name is familiar

throughout Albania ; and even among the Albanians of Southern Italy, the descendants of those who left their country after his death, he is still the hero of popular songs, of which the following is a specimen :—

“ When Scanderbeg departed for the battle, on the road that he pursued he encountered Death, the ill-omened messenger of melancholy fortune. ‘ My name is Death: return back, O Scanderbeg, for thy life approacheth its end.’ He hears him and beholds him: he draws his sword, and Death remains unmoved.

“ ‘ Phantom of air, dreaded only by cowards, whence knowest thou that I must die? Can thy icy heart foretel my death? Or is the book of heroes’ destiny open unto thee?’

“ ‘ Yesterday in heaven were opened before me the books of destiny, and cold and black, like a veil, it descended on thy head, and then passed on and fell on others also.’

“ Scanderbeg smote his hands together, and his heart gave vent to a sigh. ‘ Ah! woe is me! I shall live no more.’ He turns to contemplate the times that must come after him; he beholds his son fatherless, and his kingdom filled with tears. He assembles his warriors, and says to them :—

“ ‘ My trusty warriors, the Turk will conquer all your country, and you will become his slaves. Ducadjin, bring hither my son, my lovely boy, that I may give him my commands. Unprotected flower, flower of my love, take with thee thy mother, and prepare three of thy finest galleys. If the Turk knows it he will come and lay hands on thee, and will insult thy mother. Descend to the shore; there grows a cypress dark and sad. Fasten the horse to that cypress, and unfold my standard upon my horse to the sea breeze, and from my standard hang my sword. On its edge is the blood of the Turks, and death sleepeth there. The arms of the dreaded champion—say, will they remain dumb beneath the dark tree? When the north wind blows furiously, the horse will neigh, the flag will wave in the wind, the sword will ring again. The Turk will hear it, and trembling, pale and sad, will retreat, thinking on death.’ ”¹⁵

¹⁵ ‘ Revue des Deux Mondes,’ vol. liii. p. 404.

CHAPTER X.

BERAT TO CORFU.

Berat — Mount Tomohr — Local Chieftains — Castle of Berat — Siege under Scanderbeg — Malaria Fever — A Mountain Residence — Slavonic Names — Pass of Glava — The Viosa — Tepelen — Ali Pasha's Palace — Argyro-Castro — Albanians and Greeks — Pass of Mount Sopoti — Delvino — River Vistriza — Lake of Butrinto — Departure for Corfu.

WHEN we had reached the summit of the hills which separate the valley of the Devol from that of the Usumi, we obtained a view to the west over the winding course of the Beratino, which is formed by the combined waters of these two rivers ; and, again descending, caught sight of the white walls of the Castle of Berat, situated on a lofty pyramidal rock. A level plain intervenes, at the commencement of which lies the village of Fendroudi, a picturesque place intersected by a stream and shaded by magnificent plane-trees. Not far off, on the hill-side, was a Christian church of some pretensions. We rode across the plain to the foot of the castle-rock on the north side, but did not come in sight of the city until we had made our way round to the opposite side. Here the River Usumi is hemmed in between the castle-rock and another still loftier height ; the city nestles at the foot of the former, and spreads itself along the sides of the wooded heights to the east, where the gorge opens out, while on the other side of the river is the suburb of Goritza, the dwelling-place of the Christians, joined to the town by a well-built bridge of several arches.

Looking upwards the eye is attracted by a quaint little Byzantine chapel, niched in the side of the castle-rock at a considerable height above the town, in a position difficult of access. Berat is a better looking place than any we had seen since leaving Monastir ; many of the wooden houses have an imposing exterior, and a cleanly habitable look about them. A splendid sight awaited us as we passed through the city, for at the end of the gorge in which it lies appeared the vast flank of Mount Tomohr, closing the vista at a few miles' distance, and flushed with rose-tints by the setting sun. This mountain, which when seen thus from the west is no longer triple-crested, but strongly resembles the Acro-Corinth, is said to have perpetual snow upon it ; and, as a proof of this, we had frozen snow brought to us as a substitute for ice at our meals. This luxury is almost one of the necessities of life, for the water-supply of the lower town seems to be entirely derived from the turbid river, and the drinking-water is consequently so full of sediment as to be hardly palatable without some admixture.

The khan at which we lodged occupied an agreeable position, overlooking the Usumi, from which a refreshing stream of cool air passed into our apartment. In the adjoining room, separated only from us by a thin partition of laths with widely gaping interstices, was a large party of Gypsies, men, women, and children, who made merry with the violin and tambourine, to the accompaniment of which they sang in nasal and squeaky tones. They were a merry set, and kept up their performance till late at night, and their instrumental music was by no means inharmonious. These wanderers are to be found in great numbers in Turkey. More interesting to us were the local chieftains from the country districts, who swept in and out of the courtyard during the day with

their escorts of mounted retainers, gaily dressed, and betraying haughtiness in their countenances and restlessness in their movements. Their appearance suggested to the imagination a lively picture of the state of things when the country was only half-subdued, in which clan-feeling was the first motive to action, and feuds were universally rife. The condition of Albania at this period is well described by Mr. Finlay in a passage relating to that country in his ‘History of the Greek Revolution.’¹

“The peculiarities of Albanian society,” he says, “are most marked in the manner of life among those who are the proprietors of the soil. All of this class consider that they are born to carry arms. The great landlords are captains and leaders; the peasant proprietors are soldiers or brigands. Landlords, whether large or small, possess flocks, which supply them with milk, cheese, and wool; olive-trees, which furnish them with olives and oil; and fruit-trees, which enable them to vary their diet. Every landlord who was rich enough to lay up considerable supplies in his storehouse, expended them in maintaining as many armed followers as possible; and if his relations were numerous, and his phara or clan warlike, he became a chieftain of some political importance. Every Albanian who can avoid working for his livelihood goes constantly armed, so that whenever the central authority was weak, bloody feuds were prevalent. And at the commencement of the present century, anarchy appeared to be the normal condition of Albanian society. Gueghs, Tosks, tribes, septs, pharas, towns, and villages, were engaged in unceasing hostilities; open wars were waged, and extensive alliances were formed, in defiance of the power of the Pashas, and of the authority of the Sultan.

“Most of the towns were divided into clusters of houses called makhallas, generally separated from one another by ravines. Each makhala was inhabited by a phara, which was a social division resembling a clan, but usually smaller. The warlike habits of the Albanians were displayed even in their town life. Large houses stood apart, surrounded by walled enclosures flanked by small towers. Within these feeble imitations of feudal castles there was always a well-stocked magazine of provisions. Richly caparisoned steeds occupied the court during the day; lean, muscular, and greedy-eyed soldiers, covered with

¹ Vol. i. pp. 44, 45.

embroidered dresses and ornamented arms, lounged at the gate; and, from an open gallery the proprietor watched the movements of his neighbours, smoking his long tchibouk amidst his select friends. The wealthy chieftain lived like his warlike followers. His only luxuries were more splendid arms, finer horses, and a longer pipe. His pride was in a numerous band of well-armed attendants."

The population of Berat is reckoned at 6500, the greater proportion of whom are Mahometan Tosks; the rest are Christian Albanians, Wallachians, and Bulgarians, all belonging to the Greek Church. The history of the name Berat is instructive. It is a corruption of the Slavonic Beligrad (Belgrade), which signifies "white or beautiful castle," and this again, according to Schafarik,² is nothing but a literal translation of the earlier Byzantine name Pulcheriopolis. The castle, to which we ascended in the morning, is entirely occupied by Christians, with the exception of a few Turkish soldiers, who serve to guard the powder-magazine; probably because here, as at Ochrida, the Bishop's palace is situated in this, the oldest part of the city. On our way up we met the Bishop himself, clothed in purple robes, and mounted on a donkey. The castle is defended by two circuits of walls, now in ruins: at the summit stands a mosque and broken minaret, which are conspicuous objects from the plain below; and at the south-west angle, leading down to the river, is a covered stone staircase, also partly ruined, similar to one of the same kind at Nauplia in the Morea. Within the precincts there is an excellent cistern of pure water. In the outer wall, near the gateway, are remains of Hellenic masonry, which probably mark the site of the ancient Antipatria.³ The view to the north is striking, comprehending the plain, inter-

² 'Slawische Alterthümer,' ii. p. 227.

³ Leake, 'Northern Greece,' i. p. 361.

sected by the river, and diversified here and there by groves of trees, beyond which in the extreme distance rise the high serrated mountains of Croia. After what we had heard of the upper town being occupied by Christians, I was surprised, in descending, at meeting on the steep path, which forms the approach, a woman on horseback, wearing the close veil and black cloak, the usual costume of Mahometan women in these regions ; but I was informed of the curious fact, that the Christian women in this place have adopted Mahometan dress.

The castle of Berat is celebrated in history as the scene of an important siege conducted by Scanderbeg, against whom it was defended by the Turks, at the commencement of the reign of Mahomet II. Emboldened by a succession of victories over his opponents, the Albanian hero resolved to make himself master of that important position. Accordingly he invested it closely, at the same time arousing the ardour of his followers by reminding them of the famous defence of the Servian Belgrade by his great contemporary Hunniades. At last the place was reduced to such straits, that its garrison were forced to agree to a surrender, unless relieved within sixteen days. But before that period had expired, the Turkish General Sewali appeared with a large force in the plain to the north of the city, and there gave battle to the besiegers. After a severe struggle, Scanderbeg was defeated with the loss of 5000 of his best troops, and of Musachi, one of his firmest friends and ablest captains. On this occasion, his biographer tells us,⁴ from vexation at his ill-sucess, his under-lip split open and spurted blood, which used to be the case whenever he was violently excited in the council or the camp : and when he

⁴ Barleti of Scodra, ‘*De Vitâ et Gestis Scanderbegi*,’ p. 142.

saw the Turks cutting off the heads of his dead comrades on the field, he gave orders to 7000 of his men, notwithstanding the presence of the victorious enemy, to go and bury the slain at all hazards. The effect of this repulse, however, was but temporary, for before long we find Scanderbeg pursuing his victorious career elsewhere.

At Berat the Turkish *menzil* or post-system comes to an end ; in consequence of which, as we could find no other means of transit, we were forced to impress horses from the country. In order to do this, we had to pay a visit to the Pasha to show him our firman. His name was Abdurrahman, and he was a young and heavy-looking Osmanli. Seated on the divan near him was a white-turbaned mollah, a personage who may often be met with in the audience chamber of a pasha. In the centre of this room stood a table, an unusual article of European furniture, and on it were ranged conical rifle bullets of various sizes. After the usual cigarettes and coffee, and an interchange of compliments, he offered us guards, which we declined, but accepted the services of one of his retinue, as a guide to conduct us over the wild and intricate pass that leads to Tepelen. This man was a gay and vain Albanian, but lively and good-humoured. Poor fellow ! he was suffering from malaria fever, which made him very low-spirited at times ; but we relieved him considerably by doses of quinine, so that he expressed a fervent wish that it was to be found in Albania. This malady is a terrible scourge in many parts of Turkey : the man who accompanied our horses from Salonica to Monastir, was so ill with it that sometimes he could hardly ride, and moaned pitifully ; and in other places we saw persons in the khans miserably ill, and obtaining apparently no relief from the treatment of the native doctors. It is to the prevalence of this com-

plaint that Hahn attributes the very small number of travellers that venture into Central Albania ; he himself had a bad attack of it, and Leake was obliged to turn back, and leave the country unvisited. In the afternoon our horses arrived, accompanied by their owners, two of whom were Wallachs, of which nation a considerable number lead an agricultural life in the neighbourhood of Berat. In this they differ from their countrymen of the Pindus, who are settled at the foot of the passes which lead from Yanina to the plains of Thessaly, and monopolize the carrying trade of that part of Turkey. Here they are called Rumuni or Romans, which is the only national name that they acknowledge, that of Wallach having been given them by foreigners. Their language is a corruption of Latin, very similar to Italian in its pronunciation, and this they speak among themselves, though they are compelled in self-defence to know the Albanian also. We proceeded southwards along a tributary of the Usumi, to which our guide gave the name of Planasnik, up a clayey valley, from various parts of which rose remarkable pyramidal heights. Late at night we found ourselves scrambling up a steep mountain side, on which we lost our way, and were obliged to dismount and lead our horses as well as we could, until at last, after wandering into a village by mistake, alarming the dogs and awaking the inhabitants, we reached a country-house of the Bey of Tepelen, to which the Pasha had ordered us to be conducted. In the absence of the Bey we were entertained by his cousin—a sort of country cousin, or humble relation, he appeared—and for one night we slept on cushions instead of hay. It was a small, neat, and solidly-built residence, situated at a great height above the valley : one-half of it was shut off from the rest, and appropriated to the Bey's harem ; the room

on the other side, in which we were lodged, was large and clean, garnished round the walls with long guns, and lighted by very small apertures for windows.

The village in the neighbourhood of this place was called Jabokika, a name derived from *jabuka*, the Slavonic for “an apple.” The frequent occurrence of Slavonic names throughout Albania (we have just noticed Berat as an instance of this, and Goritza and Planasnik are others) points to the time when a large Slavonic element existed in this country. Nevertheless at the present time this element in the population has entirely disappeared, and while Wallachs are found in several districts, we look in vain for Bulgarians. For the explanation of this phenomenon we are left altogether to conjecture; and though the probability is that here, as in Greece, the Bulgarian settlers were after a time assimilated by the earlier inhabitants of the land, yet in this case the problem is a more difficult one. For whereas the superiority of the Greek race, both in respect of intellectual power and of national institutions, rendered it comparatively an easy task for them to *hellcnize* others; the Albanians, on the other hand, were not so advanced in either of these respects, when compared with the Slavonic peoples, as to account for their overpowering their nationality, and amalgamating them with themselves. Yet this would seem to have been the case, for that they were either exterminated or expelled there is no reason to believe.

The track which led from this mountain eyrie to the top of the pass was, as our Albanian companion described it in delightful Greek, “all ups and downs and chokefull of stones” (*ὅλο ἀνήφορο κατίφορο καὶ γεμάτο ἀπὸ πέτραις*). The ridge bears the name of Glava. The view from the summit is strangely wild.

Vast barren mountains rise in every direction, and on both sides of the pass sloping grey clayey hills are seen, seamed with watercourses; to the north some very distant mountains appear, even beyond those of Elbassan and Croia; to the south the eye rests here and there on scattered stone houses, scarcely distinguishable in colour from the soil on which they rest, and showing the wild life of the inhabitants by their resemblance to fortresses, the windows being few and high up in the building; to the west we obtained our first glimpse of the Adriatic. After a long and bad descent, about midday we reached a khan, pleasantly situated in the midst of plane trees, by the side of the stream of the Luftinia, a tributary of the Viosa. The building itself was of solid construction, but its occupants were clad in rags, and showed signs of great poverty; the same was the case with the people whom we met at very rare intervals as we continued our course down the valley; and this, even more than the dreariness of the scenery, impressed us with a strong feeling of loneliness and desolation during this part of our journey. At the distance of three hours from the khan we reached the banks of the Viosa, the largest and swiftest river of Albania—"Laos, fierce and wide," as Byron calls it—which flows in a north-western direction. The path which we followed from this point along the river side was the only place in our whole journey which could really be called dangerous. In some places it was carried along the edge of a precipice nearly overhanging the water, and at some of the turnings the ground was so much broken away that the horses had difficulty in finding any footing. Fortunately we passed it before nightfall, and forded the river just below Tepclen. The process of fording was not altogether easy, owing to the swift current of the stream; the

baggage horse required to be supported across by our four attendants, two of them keeping him up on either side. The distance from Berat is twelve or thirteen hours.

Having on a former occasion visited Yanina, the centre of Ali Pasha's power, and the island in the lake, where he met his death, we were naturally anxious to see Tepelen, his birthplace and favourite residence. It was a fortified city of small extent, occupying a triangular plateau which runs out from the foot of a steep and lofty mountain, so that its base is washed by the Viosa. The fortifications, which follow the line of the cliffs in a rude triangle, on one side overhang this river, on another the Bendscha, a smaller stream, which flows into it. Though part of them are ruined and the battlements broken, yet they are well and strongly built, and the angles are defended by polygonal towers. The interior is a place in which to moralise over the fall of human greatness. Hardly one house is inhabited, and a scene of more blank desolation can scarcely be conceived, for the ruins being comparatively new, are unrelieved by weeds and creepers, and have nothing of the venerable look which time bestows. At the angle which overlooks the junction of the rivers is Ali's palace, the scene of all the magnificence and display which Byron describes in 'Childe Harold.' Now the arched halls are bare,—except here and there, where the frescoes still remain upon the walls,—and all is ruinous and dismantled. A few white-kilted Albanians were grouped upon the western wall, but elsewhere we rambled about without meeting a soul. The surrounding views are in harmony with this scene of destruction,—above, huge, wild mountain heights, as barren as can be imagined; below, the shingly riverbeds, through which in winter the water must rush in an

immense volume, and the piers of a fine bridge which has been destroyed by the river. On one occasion, we were told, a ferry-boat was upset here with forty-five persons and three horses ; the latter swam ashore, but all the human beings perished. Outside the walls, close to an aqueduct, which conveyed water into the city from the mountain side, is a small Albanian village of fifty families, who now form the entire population of the place. It is at first sight extraordinary that a barbarous chieftain like Ali should have so much attracted the attention of Europe, and have become an important historical personage ; and it would be curious to trace how much of the interest which Englishmen have felt in him may be referred to Byron's visit, and the magnificent verses in which he has described it. But, if we put out of sight Ali's own character, a disgusting mixture of cruelty, perfidy, and selfishness, there is a strong romantic and dramatic element in his history. Still, no doubt Mr. Finlay is right when he says, "that the reason why he has merited a place in history is, that circumstances caused him to be the herald of the Greek revolution."

The road from Tepelen to Argyro-Castro follows the left bank of the Viosa as far as its junction with the Dryno. At this point we saw, on the opposite side of the valley, a deep gorge between lofty mountains, from which the Viosa emerges. This, which is now called Stena, was in old times the Fauces Antigonenses, near which Philip, son of Demetrius, who was defending the pass, was defeated in a great battle by the Romans. The Dryno, along the banks of which we ascended, is a clear rushing stream of green water, and, with the trees which clothe its steep banks in many places, presents some beautiful scenery. The mountains on the opposite side were terraced and cultivated below, but terminated

above in bare grey ridges furrowed by gullies and water-courses. After about three hours we reached the khan of Su Bashi, hard by which a picturesque ivy-clad bridge of one steep arch spanned the stream. Here the head of the valley opens out into a plain of some size, running from north-west to south-east, on the western slopes of which stands the town of Argyro-Castro. The neighbourhood appeared populous from the numerous villages upon the mountain sides which enclose it, but the ranges themselves resemble gigantic ridges of brown sand. The town, which is said to contain 10,000 people, has a scattered look from a distance, but as you approach its appearance is striking, as it is situated partly on spurs of the mountains running into the plain, partly on the semi-circular slopes which intervene between them. Many of the houses here are of stone, and strongly built, having been intended to serve as private fortresses, for the system of *vendetta* raged nowhere more furiously than here. Though it has ceased now, it even survived the time of Ali Pasha, who in other places was so successful in putting down the local feuds and local chieftains, that he may be said to have first brought Albania into subjection to the Porte. The inhabitants of these large dwellings form the nobility of the district, and are the proprietors of the farms which are scattered over the plain.

At this place we meet with a new element in the population. To the northward of Argyro-Castro the inhabitants, as we have seen, are almost entirely of the Albanian race; to the south, however, Greeks are found in considerable numbers, especially in the more inland districts. Even if we had not heard the Greek language spoken all round us at the khan, there was no mistaking the quick, lively, inquisitive people whom we met. Strange

to say, the line of demarcation runs across the centre of the plain, and is so sharply drawn that the northern half is Albanian, and the southern Greek, and the two populations do not intermingle with one another. The city itself is inhabited by Albanians, and the Greeks who are found there are regarded as strangers. The women here wear a white veil or towel, wound round the head, and hanging down behind. The morning after our arrival, having sent our dragoman to the Pasha to ask for horses, we thought it right to pay him a visit in his serai, which is situated within the castle built by Ali on the highest of the spurs on which the town is placed. From this castle the people of the neighbourhood seem usually to call the place "the Castro" ($\tauὸ κάστρο$), omitting the first part of the name, as Constantinople is called "the city." The fortifications here, as elsewhere, are dismantled ; the Pasha has a few guards in his service, but with the exception of a very few small bodies of this kind there is no military force nearer than Scodra or Monastir, to maintain the authority of the Turkish Government throughout Central Albania. He received us with profuse civilities, and complained of our not having taken up our abode with him, instead of going to the khan. It is quite possible for an English traveller, especially when provided with a firman, to be entertained in state at the houses of the Turkish dignitaries ; but, if he is wise, he will content himself with a humbler style of travelling, for otherwise he will lose much time in not being his own master ; he will greatly increase his expenses, from the numerous presents he is expected to make to the great man's servants ; and last, not least, he will have far fewer opportunities of intercourse with the people of the country.

The Pasha offered to provide us either with horses or

mules, but recommended the latter, on account of the steepness of the road over Mount Sopotì, which intervenes between this place and Delvino. We followed his advice, and, mounted on these, made our way up a blinding pass, partly through a river bed, partly among fragments of broken limestone, over the mountains which rise behind the town. When at last we reached the summit, we obtained an extensive view, though the atmosphere was hazy, over the level country below, the lake of Butrinto lying close to the sea, and the shores and headlands of Corfu, divided from the mainland by a winding strait, while to the right the mountains of Chimara rose conspicuous. A rugged zigzag path along the mountain side brought us, after a steep descent of some hours, to a grove of chestnut and other trees, which afforded most grateful shade. Below this was a fountain, where we saw a scene that reminded us of patriarchal times ; a number of women from a neighbouring village, picturesquely dressed in the costume of the country, with high head-dresses, white veils, and the hair in large braids at the sides of the face, were disputing with some men of another village about the right of drawing water ; and they upheld their rights manfully. From thence again we descended through more cultivated country to Delvino, a scattered and somewhat decayed town, prettily situated on verdant slopes, in the midst of plane-trees and running streams.

The last day of our journey was occupied partly in wading for several hours through streams and marshes, by the side of the river Vistrizza, which flows into the lake of Butrinto, partly in making a detour to avoid the lake, over low hills, thickly covered with thorn-bushes, and thistles, often rising to the height of ten feet. The palluria, which grows all about here, is a most for-

midable bush, as it is covered all over with tenacious hooked prickles ; it is said that if a sheep gets regularly entangled in it, it can never be extricated. The river is bordered throughout a great part of its course by rich woods of alder and willow, the shade of which, together with the abundance of water, was refreshing and pleasant ; occasionally, however, the watercourses were worn into holes, which had an awkwardly adhesive bottom. In one of these our dragoman's horse lost his footing and subsided into a mud bath, in which his rider and the saddle-bags partially shared. Further on, when we reached the higher ground, we found a village called Kinurio, or New-place, where we halted for some little time. The appearance of the people whom we met in these parts bordering on the coast, and especially the straw hats they wore, were decidedly of an Ionian character, and betrayed the influence of the neighbouring islands. The farms, however, as elsewhere in Albania, are built with a view to defence, being massively constructed of stone, with no windows in the lower portion, and those above of small dimensions. An aperture also appears sometimes above the entrance, opening downwards from a projecting piece of masonry, as in feudal castles, whereby communication may be held with a visitor before admittance, and something warm dropped upon him if need be. We proceeded for some distance through thick undergrowth, but, notwithstanding the excellence of the cover, we saw no game. Towards evening we arrived at a village called Livari, a corruption, it is thought, of Vivarium, from the fisheries in the lake, which here finds an outlet into the sea by means of a river. By the people of the place the lake is also called Boïdoporos, or Oxford. At Corfu the village is known as Butrinto or Vutzindro, but in the country itself we found these names unknown, a source

of confusion which caused us much difficulty. On the opposite side of the water is a rocky height, with remains of walls, which mark the site of the ancient Buthrotum, the *celsam Buthroti urbem* of Virgil.

As we were embarking to cross to Corfu, I said to a Turkish official who was standing by, "Now we are leaving Turkey." "Yes," he replied, "now you are going to Europe." He spoke the truth; Turkey has no claim to be reckoned among European nations.

CHAPTER XI.

MONTENEGRO.

Journey in 1865 — Coast of Dalmatia — Bocche di Cattaro — Austrian Defences — Views of the Black Mountain — Cattaro — The Scala — Approach to Montenegro — Niéghush — Laborious Agriculture — Montenegrin Dress — Destruction of Forests — Mount Lövchen — Plain of Cetinjé — History of Montenegro — The Vladika or Prince-Bishop — Sicilian Vespers of Montenegro — Episode of Stephen the Little — The Two Last Vladikas.

THE next opportunity which we had of visiting Turkey was in the summer of 1865. On this occasion we determined to cross the country from the Adriatic to the Ægean by a more northerly route than we had hitherto taken, passing through Montenegro and the border tribes of independent Albanians, and then by one of the upper passes of the Scardus range and the valley of the Vardar to Salonica. It promised to be an interesting journey, from the important geographical features of the country, the remarkable cities of the interior, and the variety of races to be seen on the way ; but the information to be had was very scanty. On Montenegro no doubt much had been written, but of the greater part of the remainder of the route, as far as I could discover, only one account had been published, viz., that of Dr. Grisebach, the celebrated German botanist, who crossed this part of Turkey, though in an opposite direction, in 1839.¹ The fullness

¹ Since the above was written, the ‘Travels in Turkey in Europe,’ of Miss Mackenzie and Miss Irby, has been published ; the route taken by those adventurous and accomplished ladies intersects mine at several points. Some other parts have been described by the French geographer Ami Boué.

and clearness of his account left nothing to be desired for the parts which he saw, though even there, from the state of things which he described, we were prepared to find that great changes had taken place since his time ; but in several places the route which we had marked out diverged from his, and here we had to look forward to getting information on the spot. In order to reach our starting-point we made our way from England to Trieste, where we had appointed our old dragoman from Constantinople to meet us, and from thence coasted along Dalmatia, stopping to see the principal cities, such as Zara, Spalato, and Ragusa, and threading the numerous islands which fringe its shores, until on the afternoon of the 18th of July we found ourselves rounding the Punto d'Ostro, the headland which protects the entrance of the Bocche di Cattaro.

The piece of water that bears this name is a narrow winding inlet, resembling rather a Norwegian fiord than any of the harbours of Southern Europe. Its length is computed at 24 miles, and it opens out from time to time into bays somewhat less than a mile across, while in the narrowest parts it may be a quarter of a mile in breadth. The whole of the seaboard is in the hands of Austria, except one small strip of the northern shore, which belongs to Turkey, a green tract of low land in the recesses of the first bay, which might form a sort of outlet for the Herzegovina, if the Turks had taken the trouble to make a port there. A little way beyond this is the town of Castelnuovo, where we landed a number of Austrian officers—agreeable men, as they usually are—who had been our fellow-passengers, together with a number of Dalmatian gentlemen bound for Cattaro, two young Albanians from Berat, who had been studying at a college in Trieste, and a young Montenegrin, dressed

in the uniform of one of the French Lycées, where he was at school, who was returning to his native country on a visit, together with a Parisian friend, whom he had induced to accompany him. After the departure of the Austrians, the Montenegrin became more communicative, and spoke depreciatingly of the numerous Austrian forts which guard the entrance to the Bocche, saying that they could stand but a very short time before a few French or English ships. About this, however, I have considerable doubt, as the Austrians are good engineers, and the forts with which the whole coast of Dalmatia bristles are generally strong. Indeed this very fact, and the great number of soldiers that are stationed in this district, show how vulnerable the Austrian government feels itself to be in this quarter. Of the state of political feeling in these parts I shall have to speak further on, but, if the doctrine of natural boundaries is worth anything, the position of a country which for some hundreds of miles possesses the seaboard of a great neighbouring country is wholly indefensible, particularly when this is backed up, as it is in Dalmatia, by an extensive system of prohibitive duties, which prevents the adjoining provinces of Bosnia, the Herzegovina, &c., from having any outlet for their exports. It has been cleverly said that Dalmatia without Bosnia is a face without a head ; the converse also is true, that Bosnia without Dalmatia is a head without a face. In the case of a general European war, nothing could be more likely than that this point should be attacked, either by some power desiring to rectify the map of Europe, or by some assertor of the cause of the Southern Slavonians ; and if that should happen, it is as probable as not that Austria by some false move would neutralize all the benefit that had been gained by years of preparation.

The entrance of the Bocche, and the first bays through which you pass, are bounded at the sides by sloping hills, partly covered by vineyards and brushwood, and in general there is more vegetation than is commonly seen on the coasts and islands of Dalmatia. In the background at some distance off rise the wild mountains, conspicuous among which from many turns in the winding strait is the lofty peak of Lövchen, the highest summit in these parts, and, as we shall see, almost a sacred spot. As we approach nearer to these, the inlet divides into two branches, and at the point of separation lies the town of Perasto, in a picturesque position, running up the mountain side from the water's edge, and adorned with elegant campaniles and numerous trees interspersed among the houses. Just off the point lie two islets, one of which is occupied by a small fort, the other by a church, the tower of which and a campanile hard by are crowned by green metal domes, which have a very Russian aspect. The branch which we followed from this point runs for some little distance due east, and then, turning at right angles, bends to the south, forming the Bay of Cattaro. The scenery of this part is of the wildest description. On both sides are lofty mountains ; but those towards Montenegro rise very steeply to the height of 4000 and 5000 feet, in precipices of a whitish-gray colour, with bold outlines, though they are but little broken into sharp peaks. They are utterly bare, except here and there on the slopes of some of the higher summits, where patches of dark forest are seen, from which, when they were more general, the Black Mountain got its name. It was strange to think that on the other side of these, and in the heart of the wild mountains, a civilized district was to be found. At the foot of these precipices, and formed apparently from their débris, is a narrow strip of vegetation,

and at many points along the shore flourishing villages appeared. This part belongs to Austria. When I asked the young Montenegrin where was the boundary-line between the Austrian and Montenegrin territory, he pointed significantly enough to the place where vegetation ceased and the steep rocks began to rise. At the head of the gulf is a sloping cultivated valley, and on the left as you approach, jammed in between the sea and the foot of a buttress of rock, which here projects from the mountain side, lies Cattaro, surmounted at a height of 900 feet by a Venetian castle. From this, lines of walls descend to the sea in innumerable angles, following the broken edges of the cliff on both sides in the most curious manner, while, between these, other interior walls run across in different directions in extremely steep positions. By the side of this, along the face of the precipices, may be traced the zigzags of the famous Scala of Cattaro, the ladder of Montenegro.

Over the sea-gate of the city stands the Lion of St. Mark, giving evidence of the days "when Venice was a queen with an unequalled dower," for nowhere is her former influence more clearly traceable than along this coast, where Ragusa is the only place that maintained its independence against her. The same thing is testified by the numerous specimens of Venetian palatial architecture which attract the eye as you pass through the streets—white marble balconies, balustrades and windows with twisted pillars, or otherwise richly and delicately ornamented. The city itself, which is larger than it appears from the sea, is a labyrinth of tiny squares and excessively narrow streets, the effect of which is that there is hardly any circulation of air, and the atmosphere is close and oppressive. Add to this its position at the foot of a steep cliff facing the west, and it may easily be

supposed that Cattaro is anything but an agreeable residence in the month of July. After a terribly hot night we were thankful to escape at an early hour, and, after threading the tortuous streets, found the horses which we had hired to take us to Cetinjé, the capital of Montenegro, waiting for us outside the land-gate. Here, as in all the other Dalmatian towns, in consequence of the narrowness of the streets and their being universally paved with flags, no beasts of burden are allowed to come within the walls.

In a few minutes we reached the foot of the Scala, and began to ascend its zigzags. It is in every respect a most remarkable pass, from the steepness of the mountain-wall, and the narrowness of the sort of gully in which it lies, at the side of the buttress of rock on which stands the castle of Cattaro. It resembles the Gemmi more than any other of the Swiss passes, but is far better engineered and more carefully built than that rough road. On our way we met some of the Montenegrins, who wore rather a poverty-stricken appearance, on their way to the town with milk and other saleable articles. The commercial relations of the Cattarese and Montenegrins seem to be regarded from somewhat different points of view by the two peoples. When we were talking to the Austrian officers on board the steamer about Montenegro, one of them observed, "Ah! poor things, they lead a hard life: it is lucky for them they have a market at Cattaro to sell their products in; if it were not for that, they would be starved." At Cetinjé, on the other hand, we heard the following story. Not long ago, when some political refugees from Montenegro,—one of whom murdered the late Prince, Danilo,—had taken up their quarters at Cattaro, the present prince, Nicolas, sent to demand their removal. No notice being taken of

this, recourse was had to another mode of action. The Prince requested his people—and his request is of equal force with a law—that they should take no provisions into the town for several days. The consequence was that the place was starved; and when the authorities sent to expostulate, and were told in return that the exiles must be removed, they professed themselves ready to do anything that was wished, provided they might have food; so the obnoxious persons were sent to Zara, where they are still.

During the first part of the ascent our views over the Bocche did not extend beyond Perasto, but these were extremely pretty. The water was perfectly smooth, except where a light breeze passed like a warm breath over its glassy surface; little promontories, which from below had hardly been seen, now came out distinctly to view; and when the sunlight reached the level of the bay, the villages which fringed the shore, with their tall campaniles, formed conspicuous objects in the scene. For the first thousand feet the steps of the ladder had been so steep, that when we were above the level of the Venetian castle, we could look right down into the town itself; higher up, where the ascent was more gradual, and the area wider over which the zigzags extended, one could see them, like a loose rope, flung about the mountain side below us, and at last we reached a point where the more distant bays of the Bocche came in view, and the broad expanse of the Adriatic reaching far away to the west. After an hour and twenty minutes we found ourselves at the summit of the Scala, and then entered on a rugged mountain-path, at the top of which is the frontier. Just as we entered the territory of the Black Mountain, we overtook the young Montenegrin, together with his Parisian friend, whose polished leather boots looked

rather out of place in this wilderness of rocks. They were followed by a woman carrying a heavy trunk, which she did good-humouredly enough : but though female porterage is the custom of the country, there was something unpleasant in seeing a box marked with a number of European luggage-labels on a woman's back. The Montenegrin was mounted on a handsome pony with elaborate trappings, which had evidently been sent to meet him ; this, together with his foreign education, led us to conjecture that he must be of some consequence in his country, and we afterwards found that he was a cousin of the Prince, and son of Voyvode Mattanovitch, one of the chief men in Montenegro. He is not the first of his countrymen that has been sent abroad for instruction ; and, among others, the Prince himself studied at Paris : but, on the whole, the experiment has succeeded but doubtfully, as one or two have since joined the Austrian service in preference to a retired life within their own narrow boundaries. It is a difficult question, for at home they can get no education that is worth the name. Perhaps the most sensible suggestion was one which I heard at Cetinjé, viz., that only those should be educated abroad who were intended for some special office in the State, but that they should provide themselves in this way with at least a good lawyer, a good tactician, and a good financier.

From the frontier we descended into a stony basin in the midst of the bare grey mountains, which is well cultivated in parts ; maize, oats, and barley being grown, and a great quantity of potatoes, which are largely raised in Montenegro, though hardly known in the surrounding countries. But the most remarkable thing (and it is at the same time a striking proof of the industry of the natives) was the way in which every available inch of

ground had been turned to account. Cuplike hollows had everywhere been scooped out in the mountain sides and carefully cleared of stones, leaving a beautiful black soil, in which tiny crops were grown ; and their sides were built round and banked up to prevent stones from falling in, and probably also because in this way they collect more moisture. In this valley lies the village of Niégush, where we stopped an hour at a little wayside inn to rest our horses. The houses here, and universally in Montenegro, are built of stone, thus forming a marked contrast to the wooden buildings which are so characteristic of Turkey : there were also two stone churches, unpretending edifices, hardly distinguishable from the secular buildings except by the cross which surmounts them ; and a new school was in process of erection. At this place we saw our first group of Montenegrins ; for a great number had assembled to welcome our young companion, many of them probably being his relations, as the present royal family came from Niégush, to which place they had migrated at an earlier period from the Herzegovina. They were fine, tall, muscular men, with a grand independent bearing ; and though their belts were full of pistols and yataghans, they had nothing of the wild and fierce look to which we were accustomed among the Albanians. One of them had the medal of Grahova, the last great battle in which they defeated the Turks : two others were shown to belong to the National Guard by their wearing on their caps the arms of Montenegro in silver, the lion and double eagle, the original emblems of Servia, from which country they have inherited it, as its rightful representatives. The handsome Montenegrin dress was well represented among them. It consists of a long white cloth coat with sleeves, reaching nearly to the knees and open in front ; an ornamented red waistcoat,

and jacket of the same colour ; a thick red sash, and belt for arms ; full blue trousers down to the knee, and white gaiters below, while the ankle is covered by a thick worked sock, and the foot by a shoe of hide, fastened by innumerable cords, which run across up to the instep. This is the full dress, but the waistcoat, coat, and jacket, are seldom worn together. The cap is peculiar, and has a symbolism attached to it by the people. Its shape is round, with a flat crown, and it is covered with black, except the top, which is crimson, with a star and other ornaments in gold in one corner. The symbolism was thus explained to me at Cetinjé by the Prince's Secretary, who took off the cap of one of the senators who was sitting near us, for the purpose. "This black," he said, pointing to the band that ran round it, "is worn in mourning for the kingdom of Servia, and the golden ornaments in the corner of the crown signify our successes over the Turks, and the freedom of Montenegro : when we have obtained perfect liberty for the Slavonians of Turkey, the whole of the crown will be ornamented in the same way." The priests in this country, or popes, as they are called, wear the same dress as the laity, and are only distinguishable from them by wearing a beard, while the others shave all except the moustache. One of them had joined our company outside the inn.

Leaving Niégush we mounted on the other side of the valley in a southerly direction, until we found ourselves in the midst of dwarf beeches, which here in many places cover the mountain sides. After passing several flocks of small sheep and goats we reached the highest point of the road, where was a spring of water, a rare treasure in this thirsty land. In the neighbourhood of this the trees were being felled by woodcutters ; when I afterwards noticed this to the Prince, and asked him whether the

destruction of the forests did not tend still further to diminish their supply of water, he replied that it was a cause of considerable anxiety to him, and that he did his best to stop the practice, but found great difficulty in doing so. It is a question of the very first importance in the southern countries of Europe, especially in Greece and Spain, how to restore the trees which have suffered from centuries of merciless devastation ; but as wood and water are mutually dependent on one another, the one requiring moisture, the other shade, their restoration will be a tedious process, even with care and the use of artificial appliances. Yet until this is done the progress of those countries will be materially retarded. As we descended on the other side of the pass a superb view opened out before us. In the foreground was a succession of broken limestone ranges ; beyond these, to the south-east, the wide blue expanse of the Lake of Scodra, and at its head a level plain, intersected by the stream of the Moratza, and bounded by the lofty snow-capped mountains of North Albania : to the south and south-west appeared some very striking peaks, the highest of which is called Rumia, being a continuation of the chain which passes through Montenegro, and separates the lake from the sea. Near to us, on our right, was the lofty beech-clad mountain of Lövchen, on whose summit is the chapel, conspicuous from all parts of the country, where Peter II., the last Vladika or Prince-Bishop, the predecessor of Danilo, lies buried. The young Montenegrin described to me how this remarkable man, at once a poet, a warrior, and an administrator, and one of the greatest benefactors of his country from the civilization and order which he introduced, used to pass days together in a tent on this romantic spot, writing poetry and communing with nature ; and so

great was his affection for it that he expressed a wish that his body should rest there after death.

The path continues to wind steeply down among the rocks, about which the sage plant grows in such quantities as to fill the air with aromatic fragrance all around, until at last the narrow plain of Cetinjé appears below you—running north and south—about three miles long, and deeply sunk in the heart of the mountains, though itself 2472 feet above the sea. The rocky character of this whole district is illustrated by a strange legend in one of the popular songs of Montenegro, that when the Almighty was passing over the face of the earth to sow it with mountains, he chanced to let fall in this land the bag which contained the rocks, and the boulders rolling out covered the surface of the country.² The town, which lies on the western side of it, not far from its southern end, is hardly seen until you are close to it; we were apprized, however, of our approach by the appearance of another relation of the Prince, an elaborately dressed youth mounted on a caracoling grey pony, who came along the plain to meet and greet our companion. But, in order to make what follows more intelligible, it may be well, before we enter the capital, to give a brief sketch of the history of the country up to the present time.

The history of Montenegro as an independent state dates from the Battle of Cossova (A.D. 1389), when the Servian kingdom was overthrown by the Turks under Sultan Amurath I. Previously to that time it had formed a part of that empire, and was governed by a local Ban; but after the subjugation of Servia the Ban of that period, who was called Balcha, and had married the daughter of Lazar, the last Servian king, proclaimed

² Cyprien Robert, 'Slaves de Turquie,' i. p. 116.

himself independent, and succeeded in maintaining himself in freedom in his stronghold of the Black Mountain. Thenceforward this country became the representative of Servia among the Slavonic races, and from its defensible position formed a place of asylum for refugees from that kingdom and from the neighbouring districts. Its history may be conveniently divided into three periods : (1) from the Battle of Cossova to the union of the secular and ecclesiastical powers in the same person (A.D. 1516) : (2) from that event to the accession to power of the present reigning family, that of Niégush (A.D. 1697) : (3) the remaining period to the present day.

During the first period the nation was ruled by the descendants of the first prince, Balcha, who received the family name of Tsernoivitch. The most distinguished personage of this race was Ivan, surnamed the Black, whose memory still lives among the people in a variety of legends. According to one of these he is not dead, but only sleeping, and is expected to return at some future time—like Arthur and other heroes of romance—for the salvation of his people. In his time the country was exposed to a series of violent attacks on the part of the Turks, who had previously been kept at bay by the successes of Scanderbeg in the neighbouring parts of Albania. After the death of that hero in 1467, the invaders began to press the Montenegrins hard ; and at last, after vainly endeavouring to obtain succours from Venice, Ivan found himself obliged to withdraw from Jabliak, the original capital, which was situated in the plain to the north of the Lake of Scodra, and to establish his head-quarters at Cetinjé in the heart of the mountains. From that time to the present that place has continued to be the capital, and though it has on several occasions been captured by the Turks, yet they have

almost always been forced speedily to evacuate it, for a barren and rocky country like Montenegro is almost impossible to hold, and the invaders have usually suffered severely in their retreat. Though the Venetians on this occasion refused to help the Prince of the Black Mountain, having just before concluded a treaty with Sultan Bajazet, yet they soon perceived the importance of an alliance with that hardy race, which might prove a barrier to arrest the westward progress of the Mahometan power. Accordingly, in the course of time, intimate relations were entered into between them—a connection which continued, more or less, for a long period with mutual advantage: but the first fruits of it were highly injurious to the Montenegrins. George Tsernoivitch, the son and successor of Ivan, had married a Venetian lady of high rank; and being discouraged by the continued advances of the Turks, at length yielded to the solicitations of his wife, and, after abdicating the supreme authority in his native country, retired to end his days in the midst of Venetian civilization and luxury. At the same time, many of the chief families left the Black Mountain, and the anarchy which ensued opened the way to the invader.

It was at this period that the secular and ecclesiastical power was united in the hands of the same person, an arrangement which has continued almost to the present day. When the last prince of the house of Tsernoivitch left the country, German, the Vladika, or Bishop, refused to follow his example, and remained at his post. At the request of the people he undertook the administration of the civil government; and though the offices thus combined could not become hereditary, as the bishops in the Eastern Church are never married, yet the system was perpetuated, and it was arranged that the

Vladika should be appointed either by popular election, or, as was afterwards the case, by the nomination of his predecessor. The two centuries that succeeded witnessed a continual struggle with the Turks, and were a time of great depression for the Montenegrins ; for though from time to time they obtained help from Venice, and were enabled to reassert their independence, yet their territory was frequently occupied by Turkish armies, and they were forced to pay tribute to the Sultan. During this period many Montenegrin families apostatized to Mahometanism, though afterwards, when the Montenegrins regained their independence, their descendants were forced to return to Christianity ; so that even now there are names in the country denoting the Mussulman origin of those that have inherited them, such as Alich, Husseynovich, that is, the sons of Ali and Husseyen.

It was not until the year 1703 that the Black Mountain was once more completely free : in that year occurred the Sicilian Vespers of Montenegro. Danilo Petrovitch of Niégush, who in A.D. 1697 had been elected Vladika by the people, was shortly afterwards taken prisoner by the Turks by means of a treacherous artifice, the Pasha in the neighbouring parts of Albania having promised him a safe-conduct through that country when he was on his way to consecrate a church for a Montenegrin settlement. The engagement was violated and the Vladika seized, ill-treated, and detained until a large sum of money was procured for his ransom. On his return to his country an act of signal vengeance was determined on in return for this deed of perfidy, and Christmas, 1703, was signalized by a general massacre of all the Mahometans who were to be found within the limits of the Black Mountain. The dreadful deed was perpetrated during the night, and on Christmas morning

the people assembled at Cetinjé, exclaiming with shouts of joy that then, for the first time since the Battle of Cossova, their country was truly free. From that time the office of Vladika continued to belong to the house of Niégush, one of that family, though not necessarily the nearest of kin, being appointed by the holder of the office during his lifetime as his successor. After this deed of blood, as might be expected, the Turks did not leave them long unmolested. In 1714 they invaded their territory, but were repulsed with great loss; returning, however, two years after with overwhelming forces under Duman Kiuprili, they succeeded in inflicting on them the severest blow they had hitherto experienced. But it was rather by craft than by force of arms that the victory was won. The Turkish general offered them favourable conditions, and on the strength of a solemn promise thirty-seven Montenegrin chieftains entered the Turkish camp in order to negotiate the treaty; they were immediately seized, and their country, being thus deprived of its bravest leaders, was invaded and overrun. Cetinjé was taken, the church and convent burnt, the inhabitants of the country districts butchered without respect of sex or age, and more than 2000 persons dragged into captivity. Notwithstanding this we find them, in 1718, assisting the Venetians, who were blockaded by the Turks in Antivari and Dulcigno; but for the next half century they remained comparatively tranquil.

Russia was the first of the European powers to recognize the existence of this small but warlike state. In the early part of the 18th century Peter the Great, perceiving that the Montenegrins might be of use to him as a thorn in the side of the Ottomans, offered them his protection on condition that they should co-operate with

him when at war with the Porte, and should acknowledge his sovereignty. The results of this agreement were insignificant for many years, but in the latter half of the century it gave rise to the following very curious episode. An adventurer, named Stephen the Little, had settled in the Venetian territory on the borders of Montenegro, and after practising for some time as a doctor, succeeded in persuading the person in whose house he was living that he was Peter III., Emperor of Russia, who was believed to have been strangled by order of the Empress Catherine, in 1762. When the report had spread, he transferred his residence to Montenegro, and, notwithstanding the protests of the Vladika, was acknowledged as chief of the country. So general was the credence given to his story that the Servian patriarch sent him a splendid horse as a present ; and ultimately the Russian Court found themselves obliged to take some steps in the matter, and sent a Prince Dolgorouki to denounce him as an impostor. On his arrival the Vladika convened the chief men, and when they heard from the Russian agent that Peter III. was certainly dead, at first they seemed disposed to believe him ; but when Stephen was afterwards confined in the upper story of the convent at Cetinjé, he contrived to regain their confidence by a device, which could only have succeeded with a very simple-minded people. He exclaimed to them that they might themselves perceive that the Prince acknowledged him to be the Emperor, for otherwise he would not have placed him above himself, but beneath : and the effect of this declaration was so great that Dolgorouki was forced to leave the country without effecting his object. Stephen the Little ruled Montenegro for four years, but his reputation was impaired in a war with the Turks, in which he did not display the prowess that

the mountaineers expected of him ; and ultimately, having lost his sight in the springing of a mine, he retired into a convent, where he was murdered by his Greek servant at the instigation of the Pasha of Scodra.

The two last of the Vladikas were at the same time the two most distinguished, and their names are held in the greatest reverence by their countrymen. The elder of these, Peter I.—who, at the end of his long reign of fifty-three years, was declared a saint by the unanimous voice of the people, on account of his wisdom and his virtues—was distinguished alike by his administrative ability in peace and his courage in war. Having been educated at St. Petersburg, and having travelled much in Europe and learnt many European languages, he was in every respect superior to his countrymen, and contributed greatly towards the introduction of civilized arts among them. At the same time he showed considerable skill in negotiating with other powers at the time when Cattaro, and the neighbouring coasts and islands of the Adriatic, were the scene of a prolonged struggle between the French and Russians in the early part of the present century. As a warrior he distinguished himself by a crushing defeat of the Turks, who had invaded his territory in 1796, in which the whole Turkish force was destroyed, and their leader, Mahmoud Pasha of Scodra, killed, and which has ever since secured the independence of Montenegro. At his death, in 1830, he was succeeded by his nephew, Peter II.—the poet-priest of whom we have already spoken—by whose influence the reforms and schemes of improvement that had been initiated by his great namesake were carried into effect. With him the union of the spiritual and temporal authority, which had now continued for more than three centuries, came to an end. Prince Danilo, his successor,

having fallen in love with a young Servian lady at Trieste, contrived that the two offices should be separated, and allowed the ecclesiastical power to pass into other hands. He also has been described as a ruler of great ability and large ideas, but the designs which he set on foot were cut short by his premature death. His nephew, Prince Nicolas, the present governor of the country, succeeded him in 1858, being at that time only eighteen years of age.³

³ Cyprien Robert, ‘Les Slaves de Turquie,’ i. pp. 124, foll.; ‘British and Foreign Review,’ xi. pp. 121, foll.

CHAPTER XII.

MONTENEGRO (*continued*).

Cetinjé—Political Constitution of the Country—Population and Revenue—Need of a Port—The Monastery—Right of Asylum—The Archimandrite and Bishop—The Montenegrin Church—Ecclesiastical Views—Feeling of the People towards England—Piesmas or National Songs—Sitting of the Senate—The Crédit Mobilier—Prince Nicolas—Mirkho—Descent to Rieka—Estimate of the Montenegrins—Their Political Importance—Atrocious Murder—Lake of Scodra—Fishery—Pelicans.

NOTHING could well be less romantic than the capital of the Black Mountain : except for the absence of water, it might easily be mistaken for a Dartmoor village. It consists of one long street of plain stone houses of two stories, and whitewashed, from the middle of which another wider street projects at right angles, leading up to the palace. Owing to its position at an angle of the plain, which has no outlet for its waters except a small subterraneous passage, the place is often flooded, especially on the melting of the snow, which sometimes lies on the ground for three months together in the winter : in consequence of this, the ground floors of some of the houses are uninhabited. This was the case with the *locanda* at which we were housed,—a wretched abode in the middle of the village, consisting of two rooms on the upper floor, one of which served as a kitchen, the other as a bedroom for strangers, and a place of general resort for other persons, who came to take their meals there. In this narrow apartment there was but one small window, cold being evidently the principal enemy to be guarded against ; and round the walls were hung small

prints of the Emperor and Empress of Austria, the late Prince Danilo, and his wife the Princess Darinka, together with a few others. For the sake of future travellers, we were glad to see that a large inn was in course of erection at the end of the main street,—a much more spacious building, in fact, than could ever be required for visitors ; but we were led to understand that it was intended also to accommodate such of the senators as came from other parts of the country to reside there from time to time. The publicity of our room, however, had its advantages, as it enabled us to see more of the people, and to get more information about the country, than we could otherwise have done. First came in a Servian who could speak a little German ; he was employed as inspector of small arms for Montenegro, as many muskets were being refitted which had been taken from the Turks or obtained from other quarters. When dinner-time arrived (for we had reached Cetinjé before noon), there appeared the imposing figure of one of the senators, Pope Elia Plamenatz, a peaceful-looking giant, as most of these warriors of the Black Mountain are : he was the head of the Montenegrin representatives in a commission which was shortly to assemble, to arrange with the Porte some disputed points about the frontiers of Turkey and Montenegro. After dinner the Prince's secretary, M. Vaçlik, arrived, a Bohemian by birth, though a naturalized subject of this Principality : he proved to be a very intelligent and well-read man, and as he could talk French as well as other languages, his society was an inestimable advantage to us. Those who know this country best say, that he has more head and more sense than any one in it ; and that his temperate counsels, as far as they are allowed to have weight, are of great benefit in counterbalancing the restless and

warlike spirit of the people. The pleasure of meeting seemed to be mutual, for he expressed himself greatly delighted at the opportunity of an interchange of ideas, as they see very few strangers (we were the first who had visited the country that year), and amongst themselves the conversation, month after month, is one everlasting round of local and national topics. It was from him that we principally obtained the following information.

The constitution of Montenegro is in form a limited monarchy, but in reality approaches very closely to the patriarchal system. There is a senate of sixteen persons, a body of recent institution, but the whole system centres in the person of the Prince, or Gospodar, as he is called ; it is to him the people look, and he holds them together, and prevents them from falling asunder into a number of small clans. The senate, of whom ten are generally in residence, are elected by the people and confirmed by the Prince ; but in these and similar appointments the Prince consults the wishes of the people, or, when he has to decide between rival candidates, chooses the man who has won most honours—in war, of course. It was modelled to some extent on the Russian senate, and is at once a deliberative and judicial body. At its head is Mirkho, the father of the present Prince, who was passed over in the succession on account of his fire-eating propensities—an arrangement which was made before Danilo's death, and acquiesced in by Mirkho—as it was thought that his hasty temper would embroil them with the neighbouring countries. He has, however, received the highest offices under his son, as commander of the army and president of the senate, only he surrenders the latter office to the Prince when he is present. There is some talk now of forming a sort of Ministry, by giving the senators separate offices, so as to

relieve the Prince of some part of his labours, and leave him more time for study ; for he is a great student, and a poet withal, being at present occupied in writing a tragedy. As it is now, all the people come to their Gospodar on every possible occasion ; if a peasant's crop has failed, he applies to him for advice and assistance ; and similarly every matter, whether small or great, is referred to him, so that he has no leisure. The change, if it is made, will be an experiment, for it is doubtful whether the people, with their strong personal feeling towards their Gospodar, will be satisfied with applying to a secondary agency ; and the Montenegrins are not very tolerant of changes, as was shown at the time of the introduction of the senate. The history of this, which is at the same time the history of the political exiles—of whom I have spoken in connexion with Cattaro—is as follows. Under the old régime, besides the Vladika or Prince-Bishop, there was another officer of great importance in the administration of the state, the civil governor, who was the representative of a sort of hereditary aristocracy, possessing considerable local influence. The effect of this system was that the power was lodged in the hands of very ignorant persons, who usually offered a determined opposition to all schemes of reform. The office was suppressed by Peter II., who seized the opportunity of the civil governor being suspected of treachery ; and the aristocracy itself was done away with, as a power in the state, by him and his successor, and the elective senate substituted in its place, in order that distinction should be won by merit alone. But these measures, as might be expected, called forth strong opposition, and a reactionary party was formed who became dangerous to the Government, and at last were exiled or retired from the country. It was one of them

by whom Prince Danilo was murdered at Cattaro. M. Vaçlik was one of his companions on that occasion, and had just helped him to land from a boat when he was shot through the body.

The population of the whole country is estimated at 200,000, of whom 25,000 are reckoned as forming the army; but, in theory, every Montenegrin is supposed to be a soldier, and indeed it is necessary enough that all should be ready to serve, considering the length of the frontier they have to defend relatively to their numbers. This, too, agrees with the idea of the Black Mountain being a camp, the inhabitants of which should always be ready to act on the defensive. The National Guard is a picked body of 100 men, whose head-quarters are at Cetinjé, but they are employed as a rural police to keep order throughout the country. Besides these the Prince has a body-guard of ten men, but this is hardly more than nominal. The whole revenue amounts to about 12,000*l.*, of which not more than one thousand goes into the Prince's privy purse, and out of this he supports twenty-five scholars at his own expense at the school at Cetinjé, and pays also in great measure for the education of his young cousin in France. Voyvode Mattanovitch, the father of this young man, is one of the wealthiest men in the country, having an income of about 100*l.* a year. There is also a sum of money which is paid annually by Russia to the Montenegrins, amounting to about 3400*l.*; this, however, is not, as has sometimes been stated, a subsidy from that Power, but an indemnity for the losses which they sustained in assisting the Russians to drive out the French from Dalmatia. The revenue is now raised by taxation, though, as usual in countries unaccustomed to it, it was a work of no slight difficulty to introduce the system. Formerly they used

to support themselves by *tchetas*, or raids into the Turkish territory ; and when that custom was abolished, and they were expected to pay themselves what before they had levied from their enemies, the people murmured, and even rose against it, complaining that they were being brought into servitude, and no better off than the *rayahs* in Turkey. Accordingly the demand was for a time withdrawn, but afterwards it was re-instituted, and now the money is paid without opposition.

The principal exports, besides the supplies which they send to Cattaro, are *scodano*, a wood used in dyeing ; *castradina*, or meat smoked and prepared in a peculiar way ; *scoranzi*, small delicate fish, great quantities of which are found in the Lake of Scodra ; and insecticide powder, which is collected from a flower that grows plentifully on the mountains. Wine and oil are not exported in any large quantities, most of what is produced being consumed in the country : but they are rather proud of sending their potatoes to Scodra, as the only supply of that vegetable which is to be had there, or, in fact, anywhere in Albania, comes from the Black Mountain. But their great want, of which they are continually and with great reason complaining, is that of a port. At present, it is true, both Austria and Turkey allow them free export and import ; but this has not long been the case, and they have no guarantee that it will continue : they feel that they ought not to be thus dependent on others, and that the regular and peaceful employments which depend upon trade can never flourish while they are so. One of the reasons why they look upon England with affection is, that they remember how that country gave up Cattaro to them, when they took it from the French in 1813, only they were forced by Russia in the following year to cede the place to the

Austrians. Even now they do not doubt that if England desired the Turks to give them a port, they would do so ; and that Austria, if she cared to interfere, would not avail to prevent it. That this would probably be the case I have been assured by one who is well acquainted with the views of the Turkish authorities about these parts, and no partisan of Montenegro. Their fear is, no doubt, that by this means they would be enabling the mountaineers to obtain an unlimited supply of arms, which would be used against themselves ; but whatever danger there might be of this would, even from this point of view, be fully compensated by a decrease of that restlessness, arising from want of occupation, which makes them at any moment ready for war. When I enquired how the people employed themselves during the winter months, and when the snow was on the ground, thinking that they might turn their hands to such things as are required to be prepared for the coming season, the answer I received was, "They do nothing in the world except try to keep themselves warm." Yet these same men, when they go abroad in companies to work, remaining for several years together at Constantinople, Varna, and other places, where they are employed in making roads and similar occupations, are considered excellent workmen.

In the course of the afternoon we went to the monastery to visit the ecclesiastical authorities. This building, which lies on the hill side, just where the ground begins to rise behind the palace, was formerly the residence of the Vladika, but now is made to serve a variety of purposes, as it contains a prison and a school, as well as the dwelling-places of the Archimandrite, the bishop, and one secular priest. These buildings rise on three sides of a court, the fourth being formed by a blank wall, on the

outside of which is a stone tablet with the double eagle of Servia in relief; this was brought from an older monastery, that stood in the plain, and was destroyed on the approach of the Turks, when on one occasion they penetrated to Cetinjé. We were told that some time ago two *Evangelia* with metal bindings were found in wells near its site, and they hope sooner or later to find other treasures which were secreted on that occasion. Above the rest of the monastery rises a tower, which contains the library. The chapel is a plain building with a gilt iconostase, the ornaments being in the Russian rather than the Greek style ; but it is regarded as a great sanctuary, as it contains the tomb of the sainted Peter I., and that of Danilo. On the first of these a cross was laid ; on the latter the sword which he wore at the time of his death. When we inquired about the prison, we were told there were but few prisoners, and those mostly for slight offences ; what they are said to feel more than the confinement is being deprived of their arms, which is a great disgrace to a Montenegrin. The punishment for theft is flogging, the offender being stretched over a cannon taken from the Turks, which is placed for that purpose, together with a number of others, in front of the palace. The people in general are said to be very honest ; when we visited the Prince's stables, which lie a little way out of the village, we found them unguarded and the doors open, though some of the bridles that hung there had ornaments of solid silver ; and at the meeting of the two streets there is a tree, where we noticed a musket suspended, that being the place where missing things are left to be reclaimed by their owners. One custom which used to exist in former times, and in theory, I believe, exists still, is remarkable as illustrating the primitive idea of the right of asylum. So absolutely was "every

man's house his castle," that if a criminal took refuge in his home, there was no means of forcing him to surrender himself to the law ; and when Peter II., in the course of his reforms, had to meet this difficulty, he did so by setting fire to the building where the offender was concealed. Now, however, it is said that order is so well maintained throughout the country that the criminal has no option but to surrender himself when ordered to do so by the chief of his district, the only alternative being to fly the country, that is, in other words, to go into Turkey or Austria, which few Montenegrins would think of doing.

We were first introduced to the Archimandrite, or head of the monastery, whom we found in a commodious and well-furnished room. He was a man of magnificent appearance and almost colossal proportions, the effect of which was still further increased by his long dark robes, open in front and lined with crimson, which reached nearly to his feet ; under this he wore a cassock with a crimson sash, and from his neck was suspended a cross richly ornamented with diamonds, turquoises, and other gems. His hair was long and flowing, and his open, intelligent, kindly, and humorous countenance was extremely prepossessing ; he has the name of being a truly good man, an excellent priest, and a brave warrior. He came originally from the Herzegovina, and accordingly, when the Turks attacked Montenegro in 1862, to him was entrusted the office of raising those of the mountaineers whose territory bordered on that district. Though the office of Archimandrite is maintained, there are now no monks in the convent, their place having been taken by scholars, of whom there are sixty at present in the school. This same change has passed over most of the other monasteries throughout

the country, and by this means, and the building of schoolhouses in the principal villages, education is spreading, though it is retarded by want of funds. After some conversation with this dignitary (M. Vaçlik interpreting for us, as he spoke no language but Slavonic), we went with him to the apartments of the bishop, whose name was Hilarion, a middle-aged man, with a very dark complexion, and dark hair and eyes ; here we remained some time longer, conversing about their church and their political views. In the midst of our conversation a violent thunderstorm came on, accompanied by heavy rain, which caused great rejoicing, as it had long been looked for and was much wanted.

The Montenegrin Church, though a part of the orthodox communion, is wholly independent, owing no submission either to the Patriarch of Constantinople on the one hand, or the Russian Synod on the other ; even with the Servian Church, notwithstanding the strong feeling that binds the two together, they have no closer connection than that of sympathy. When a new bishop is appointed he is sent for consecration either to Russia, as has been the case on the last two occasions, or to Austria, where there is a large body of orthodox Christians, composed of Servians and others who migrated from the interior of Turkey, under the Bishop of Ipek, about the year 1690, at the invitation of the Emperor Leopold, and were settled partly in Slavonia, between the Save and Drave, and partly in other parts of the Austrian dominions. There are about 400 churches in Montenegro, and 500 or 600 priests. What is most wanted is an ecclesiastical seminary, for at present the clergy have no education ; war, they said, had left them no time to turn their attention to such things. But an increase of intelligence among the priests, M. Vaçlik remarked, would

tend more than anything to raise the tone of the people ; for though they observe the Sunday and the fast days carefully, and attend regularly at church, and are moreover a very moral people in their general conduct, yet their ideas on the subject of Christianity are very vague, and vital religion has but little hold on their hearts. Religious toleration is fully established in the country ; there are two or three Mahometans now living amongst them, and a few Roman Catholics, one of whom is M. Vaçlik himself ; and he assured me that no suspicion or prejudice had ever existed against him on account of his creed. At Rieka, the port by which they communicate with the Lake of Scodra, a weekly market is held on Saturdays, to which thousands of people resort ; and though numbers of these are Mahometans, not even a policeman is required to keep them in order. And the Archimandrite added, that their desire was that all the inhabitants of Turkey, whether Christian or Mahometan, or of any other creed, should have equal rights, and full power of exercising their religion freely.

With a view of ascertaining their feelings towards the Greeks, I turned the conversation towards the monasteries of Athos, expecting that at least the Slavonic convents there would have some interest for them. But I found that they knew but little about them, and cared still less ; nor did they manifest any regard for the Constantinopolitan Church in general, or for the independent Church of free Greece. But when I touched on the relations of the Bulgarians to the Patriarch, and the questions pending between them, the feeling of nationality was at once roused ; they protested strongly against Fanariote interference with a Slavonic people, and maintained that the Bulgarians ought to have their own metropolitan, as they had in former days. Fanariote influence, they said,

was only another name for Turkish influence. When the Bulgarians were independent, they would themselves be perfectly friendly with the Greek Church ; but not till then. With regard to their political relations, and the possibility of a community of action between Slaves and Greeks, they thought it quite possible to unite them under one common head, provided only that they might be allowed severally to retain their respective institutions. But it was easy to discover how strong the antipathy between them is, and how difficult it would be for the two races to combine in any matter where rival interests were at stake, or where vigorous and harmonious action was required. Both in this conversation, and in others which we held with some of the senators, we could not fail to remark the intimate knowledge which they seemed to possess of what was said in England about them and the South Slavonic peoples generally, and of the persons who espoused or opposed their cause. Not only the names of Lord Palmerston and Mr. Layard, in whom they recognised the chief supporters of the Turks against the Christians, and those of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone, were familiar to them, but they spoke gratefully also of Mr. Gregory, Mr. Denton, Mr. Cobden, and others, for having espoused their cause ; and reminded us that when the news of the last-named statesman's death reached Belgrade, a funeral mass had been said in honour of his memory. The truth is, that whatever is spoken in Parliament or published in England about these nationalities, is at once reproduced in the Servian newspapers, which pass as a matter of course into Montenegro ; thus we found that they were acquainted (and pleased) with Lady Strangford's account of this country, in her 'Eastern Shores of the Adriatic,' which had appeared not very long before our visit. They expressed most kindly

feeling towards our country and Church, but thought the English generally, or at least our government, were misinformed with regard to the condition and views of the Christians in Turkey; otherwise they would not discourage them on every occasion, and provide the Turks with money to subjugate them.

The national instrument of these parts is the *gusla*, a parent of dismal sounds, but as dear to a Slavonic ear as the bagpipe is to a Highlander. In shape it is like an elongated pear cut in half, and it is something between a guitar and a violin; the smaller kind, which the Bulgarians generally use, being more like the former, while the larger, which is in use in the Black Mountain, resembles the latter in having a bridge and being played with a bow, though it has only one string. As we were walking after nightfall, with the Secretary, up and down the main street of the village, we heard the sound of this instrument issuing from one of the cottages, accompanied by a human voice, which was droning out what seemed a kind of recitation. The movement was slow at first, but when we returned, after the lapse of a quarter of an hour, it had become rapid and excited. As it was evidently a popular entertainment, from the number of people who had gathered together to listen, we enquired what it meant, and were informed that it was a *piesma*, that is, one of the national songs, or ballad narratives, which form the literature of the country, and in which their annals and the deeds of their great men are enshrined. When they are of a martial character, as is usually the case, all the events which precede the battle are chanted in measured time, while the fast and furious conflict is accompanied by corresponding rapidity of recitation. The number of these pieces is very great, and they are handed down orally from father to son, the

blind man being, as of yore, the professional minstrel, though the art is not confined to any class. They are continually being added to, for the poetic art, such as it is, never fails. At the present time Mirkho, the Prince's father, is the principal composer of them ; and it was described to me by one who had to pass a long winter's evening at the palace, how enthusiastically the old warrior recited his own compositions for hours together, and how difficult it was for some of his audience to avoid falling asleep during the proceeding.

In the neighbourhood of Cetinjé there are extensive meadows, without hedges, and divided from one another by hardly distinguishable landmarks, so that the level plain is unbroken. In consequence of its cold climate the grass was only now being mown, and from the same cause there are but few trees, only a few poplars, and a walnut or two, being seen here and there. The mountains rise on both sides, range behind range, those towards the east being completely bare, while those opposite are prettily interspersed with bushes and other mountain vegetation. In a commanding position on one of the lowest of these heights, just above the monastery and overlooking the village, stands an old ruined tower, over the gate of which in more barbarous times used to be hung the gory heads of Turks killed in battle. We had mounted to this point the next morning, and were on our way down, when a cave in the hill-side attracted our attention, on entering which we found it inhabited by a family, consisting of a mother and two boys, who had lost their father in the late war. They were compelled by poverty to seek refuge in this place, but what surprised us most was that the boys had books in their hands, and on enquiring we found that they could both read and write, an evident proof that the schoolmaster is

abroad in the country. Descending again to the plain, we came to the open place in front of the palace, where the senate holds its sittings. We found them in full conclave, and it was a sight not easily to be forgotten, and one which impresses the spectator most forcibly with the patriarchal and primitive condition of things. Their parliament house, as they are never tired of saying, is the largest in the world, being the open air of heaven ; they meet under the shade of a spreading tree, round the foot of which two rows of seats are built. On the uppermost of these Prince Nicolas was seated, and below him the senators in their grand costumes were ranged in order. They were engaged in hearing a case of justice ; the plaintiff and defendant were before them, and the witnesses and others standing round. From the warmth with which the discussion was carried on, and the demonstrative gesticulation used, the case appeared to excite considerable interest, until the Prince rose and gave judgment, and then walked away, followed by two of his guards, to the palace, while the senators retired to the village with their secretary, who afterwards wrote out the verdict.

We also visited the offices of the press, and of the *Crédit Mobilier*. At the former a second edition was being printed of some poems by the priest, who lives in the convent, and is said to have great poetic taste. The type of this was excellent, and we saw also that which was put up for printing Montenegrin passports. With regard to the other office, I anticipate that my readers will exclaim, What can be the *Crédit Mobilier* of a country like Montenegro ? Well, it is a sort of public pawnbrokers' establishment, where people can borrow money from the State, either for domestic purposes, or to improve their lands, or for any other object,

by depositing any valuables which they have in their possession. In this way it gets an additional interest to a stranger, for a finer collection of handsome weapons cannot easily be seen. Most of them are yataghans and pistols taken from the Turks in battle, which are richly wrought in silver and ornamented with agates and precious stones. The workmanship of one set of cartouche boxes attached to a military belt was superb—filigree work on solid silver. There were also several of the wide heavy belts which the women wear, set with large cornelians; and one very curious deposit—an elaborate miniature likeness of the Sultan in a case, one of many similar ones which have been sent from time to time to the Montenegrins by the Turkish Government, when it was their purpose to conciliate them. These objects are sold after a time, if they are not reclaimed; but in the case of more wealthy persons, in whose hands the money lent is supposed to be safe, the deposit is only a nominal guarantee; thus we were shown one dagger which was a receipt for 120*l.*

In the afternoon we had an interview with Prince Nicolas. The palace is built on two sides of a court, the opposite sides of which are enclosed by high walls, and, like all the other houses in Cetinjé, it is of two stories. It is simply, but comfortably arranged, the rooms on the first floor opening out from a passage which runs the whole length of the building; in one part of the passage a swallow had been allowed to build its nest. M. Vaçlik ushered us into a handsomely furnished room, round which were hung portraits of the late Prince Danilo, and of the Emperors and Empresses of Russia, Austria, and France, all presented by themselves: here the Prince joined us. He is a handsome man, but old looking for his years; for though he was only

twenty-five years of age, he looked certainly eight years older. He has a very agreeable countenance and fine aquiline features ; his hair is jet black, and his complexion very dark, in which respects he differs from his subjects, who have usually light hair and eyes. His tall, well-built figure was shown off to advantage by his magnificent dress,—an elaborate specimen of Montenegrin costume, though differing only from those we had seen before in its superior richness, and in his wearing Hessian boots, and carrying no arms. He talks French admirably, and we conversed with him for some time partly about his own country, and partly about subjects relating to England, among which he referred to Speke's discovery of the source of the Nile. At last he withdrew to prepare for a ride to Niégush, where he was to meet his aunt, the Princess Darinka, Danilo's widow, who had been passing the previous winter at Zante, and was now expected from Cattaro. He is said to be extremely fond of her, and is now building her a house nearly opposite the palace. As she is a well-educated and clever woman, her influence over him is great ; and she is regarded by some as the good genius of the country, as she sees the danger of war, and is able to counterbalance the fiery counsels of his father Mirkho : it is consequently to be regretted that she is so much absent from the country.

We waited outside the palace gates to see the cavalcade start. First came the Prince, mounted on a prancing steed, and after him Mirkho, who was followed by the rest of the company. Mirkho is a man of about forty-five years of age, and short for a Montenegrin : like his son, he is very dark, and has a prominent nose and strongly marked features ; his countenance is very lively, and looks as if it could on occasions be very

fierce. As we saw him, however, his appearance was peaceful, not to say comical, for he wore a straw hat, with a red fez stuck on the top of it to keep off the sun, and in his hand he held a long chibouque, at which he puffed away vigorously as he rode along. In a kiosk, or summer-house, attached to the palace there is a speaking likeness of him by a Bohemian artist named Czermak, the first Slavonic portrait painter of the day, which has been exhibited and much admired in London and elsewhere in Europe. After their departure we were taken to see the collection of trophies in the billiard-room of the palace, where in the winter the senate holds its sittings. This consists of swords and standards, which are hung along the walls; and of medals, which are arranged in a case. Of these latter a considerable number were English Crimean medals, which had been presented by the English to the Turks who served in that campaign, and afterwards lost by them to the Montenegrins.

About four o'clock in the afternoon we left Cetinjé for Rieka, on our way to Scodra. One of the persons that accompanied us to bring back our horses was a Montenegrin woman, who would willingly have carried our baggage for a consideration, if we had consented to that arrangement; but, like most of the women of the country, she appeared not to have had her spirit at all broken by hard work, for anything more independent cannot well be conceived. Almost all the tillage of the ground is performed by the weaker sex, as manual labour is considered degrading to men. When we reached the southern end of the plain, we mounted the heights that bound it on that side, from the summit of which, looking back, the best view of the little town is obtained, together with the mountains which surround it, and the

mass of Mount Lövchen magnificently towering over all. On the other side, the Lake of Scodra is finely seen at no great distance off. Descending from this point in the midst of grey rocks, interspersed with trees of a singularly bright green, we came at last to a fertile valley, dotted with thriving villages, where the eye was refreshed by the sight of vineyards, maize plantations, and other vegetation. This side of the country is generally more productive than that towards Niégush; but the part towards the northern and north-eastern frontier is said to be the softest and richest district. During the first part of the descent the path had been very steep and stony, but from this upland valley down to that of Rieka it was still worse, and walking was preferable to riding; the whole journey, however, only occupied three hours, and from this, and the short time it took us to reach Cetinjé from Cattaro, it may be gathered how narrow the territory of the Black Mountain is in this part. The village of Rieka lies at the foot of the mountains, in a bend of the river of the same name,—a stream of considerable size, which is joined by another and larger tributary a little way below. In front of the houses is a well-built quay, and the river is spanned by a lofty bridge: it is altogether a more imposing place than Cetinjé, though it has hardly yet recovered from having been burnt by the Turks in the last war. Close to the bridge is a house belonging to the Prince, and in this, at his request, we took up our abode. Our original intention was to start the same evening for Scodra, in the hope of arriving there at an early hour the next morning, and thus avoiding the heat of the day, which would have been intolerable in an open boat on the lake; but as the boats were few, and the men unwilling to leave at once, we were compelled to wait till the following afternoon.

The impression produced on us by our visit to the country was an agreeable one, and notwithstanding some circumstances which I have yet to mention, and with all due allowance for our information being derived from a not wholly unprejudiced quarter, was decidedly favourable to the Montenegrins. Their appearance is certainly prepossessing, from their dignified yet natural bearing, and the composed and peaceful look which distinguishes them, notwithstanding that they all carry arms; and their noble faces, strongly marked features, and tall, well-built figures, impress you with a sense of character and power. Throughout the country, also, everything wore an appearance of quiet and industry, which, as well as the frank character of the people, especially attracted our attention from the contrast it presented to the restless life and wild, cruel look of the tatterdemalion Albanians whom we had last seen on the eastern shores of the Adriatic. At the same time, we could not but feel that their position would be improved, both in the eyes of strangers and in the opinion of European States, if they showed a little more modesty, and a somewhat less exalted opinion of themselves and their position: as it is, they are for ever striving to keep themselves before the world, and never contented unless they have some new project in which to distinguish themselves. That their political importance is considerable no one will deny who understands their position, forming, as they do, a strong keystone to support any movement on the part of the south Slavonian races towards asserting their nationality. And such a movement, in all probability, will not be long in coming. It is not only among the Servians and Montenegrins, who are closely bound together both by historical associations and by present sympathy, that the desire of political union exists, but

throughout the Herzegovina also, and Bosnia, the same feeling is widely spread, so much so that though the inhabitants of the latter country are to a great extent Mahometans, yet, it is said, if they had to choose between the conflicting interests of religion and race, they would readily sacrifice the former to the latter, and assist their brethren in overthrowing the dominion of the Turk. Again, in all the cities of Dalmatia the inhabitants are divided into an Austrian and a national faction, which are usually about equally balanced in respect of numbers ; the Austrian party relying on the numerous families intermarried with Austrian officers, or themselves supplying officers to the army ; the national party on the widespread sympathy with the neighbouring Slavonic races. These parties are very jealous of one another, and a strong line of demarcation is drawn between them, so that they have separate clubs and cafés, and the national party is carefully watched by the military authorities. The Bulgarians, too, who form so considerable a part of the population of European Turkey, though, from their natural inertness and depressed condition, they have few political ideas, are beginning to be leavened with the same sentiment, and their leading men, at all events, look in the same direction. In the case of a general rising, the Black Mountain would be a *point d'appui* of the very greatest importance. As an asylum for refugees it is still, as it always has been, serviceable to the neighbouring Christians. Though M. Vaçlik assured me that there were no refugees at present in the country, and that Prince Nicolas would not receive them if he knew it, yet there can be no doubt that in case of a persecution or insurrection in the Herzegovina, or other neighbouring districts, fugitives would be received with open arms ; indeed, the right

of asylum is one of the provisions of their constitution.¹

With regard to their general policy, I had some doubts before visiting the country whether Mirkho's warlike views were not really the wisest, and whether a more peaceful policy, having for its object the internal development of the people, would not tend to undermine that love of liberty and resolute independence which alone has made them what they are. But this idea was dispelled by what we saw and heard. So strong is the national feeling, so instinctive their love of daring deeds, so traditional the determination to resist all external force, that there seemed to be no danger of these being undermined by the introduction of commerce and civilization. On the contrary, the most useful function of the Prince seemed to be that, which to the best of his ability he is endeavouring to carry out,—

“ — by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and, through soft degrees,
Subdue them to the useful and the good.”

Before leaving Rieka we heard of an occurrence which illustrates the wilder side of the Montenegrin character. While we were at Cetinjé we had seen a procession of fifteen women accompanied by three of the guards leave the place, chanting, as they went, a shrill wailing dirge, and in the course of the evening they returned in the same fashion. On inquiring the meaning of this we were told, that they had gone to Rieka to attend the funeral of a relative ; but of the circumstances no further information was given us at the time. On arriving at the spot we learned that an atrocious murder had been committed, the history of which was as follows. A Monte-

¹ See an article in ‘Vacation Tourists for 1861,’ p. 406.

negrin of the lower class had, from some unexplained cause, conceived a violent hatred against one of his countrymen at Rieka, an officer in the army, and determined to compass his destruction. Accordingly he repaired to the Prince at Cetinjé, and in a private interview laid information against the officer, saying that he had formed a plot to take the Prince's life. The Prince discredited the whole story, and refused at first to take any notice of it: but at last, when the man became very importunate, he consented to send some of the guards to bring the accused for examination. The informer insisted on accompanying them, and when they reached Rieka, seeing his enemy standing on the bridge, went on in front of the others, pulled out his pistol, and shot him in cold blood, exclaiming at the same time, "There, now he is punished!" This had happened a few days before our visit, and the murderer was to be executed on the day after we left, that being market day, when a great concourse of people would be gathered together. His sentence was, to be shot by the guards on the bridge, the same spot where he had killed his victim, and that his body should be exposed in the market-place for three days.

Other circumstances combined to give us an unfavourable impression of the people of Rieka. During our stay we had obtained our meals from a small inn hard by the Prince's residence, and when on our departure the next afternoon a somewhat exorbitant charge was made, we raised no objection, thinking that the guests of a prince must be content to pay in princely style. No sooner, however, had we reached the boat which we had hired to take us to Scodra,—and which, owing to the shallowness of the stream, was moored a quarter of a mile below the village,—than the master of the inn, who had been absent

when our bill was presented to us, overtook us and demanded double of what we had already paid. When we steadily refused to pay, he flew into a violent passion, and nothing could be conceived more truly diabolical than the expression produced on his countenance by real or pretended rage. It reminded me forcibly of some of the most malignant faces of criminals in Gustave Doré's illustrations to Dante's 'Inferno.' The worst of it was, that the six boatmen who formed our crew,—partly, as it seemed, from a disposition to take their countryman's side, and partly from fear that they themselves should not get their money,—at first refused to move, and then demanded that they should be paid in full before starting. We at once flung down in the boat the three Turkish sovereigns for which we had bargained, and thereby restored confidence; but it was with no little satisfaction that we found ourselves a few minutes afterwards floating down the middle of the stream.

Our conveyance was one of the long clumsy boats regularly used on the lake (*Londra* is their name), about forty feet in length by seven wide, flat-bottomed and without seats, for the rowers, except those in the bows, stand up and push with the oar. The oars work in a band which is attached to the gunwale, thus serving instead of a thole: these bands are made of withies rudely twisted, as we learnt from having to stop some time by the side of a willow-bed to replace by fresh ones the old bands which had become rotten. Shortly after this our men stopped again by the other bank, to take in a young fellow, to whom they had promised to give a passage down to Scodra. He proved serviceable to us, as he could speak a little Italian; but the crew would hardly have taken him on board, had they known what a bad character he gave both to them and to the Monte-

negrins generally who visit Scodra. He represented them as great cheats, and as having a bad name in the bazaars there for carrying off things for which they never pay. This is likely enough, for the facilities are great, and the temptation strong ; and, to say the truth, we found them a lazy, rough, independent set of fellows, and anything but agreeable companions. But no people ought to be judged of from its boatmen, or from the inhabitants of a frontier market town like Rieka.

The river for some way pursues a winding course between wild mountains, and as these recede to a greater distance, the sides of its wide channel are filled with extensive beds of rushes, while numerous egrets, divers, and other water birds, appeared on the surface. After about three hours we reached the point where it opens out into the lake ; near to this are several islands, Vranina, Monastir, and Lesendria, the two latter of which have often changed hands between the Turks and Montenegrins. They are now in the possession of the former, who are engaged, as the Pasha of Scodra afterwards told us, in completing and strengthening the fine old castle which covers almost the whole island of Lesendria. As we looked back from here after sunset, the mountains of the eastern part of Montenegro appeared extremely grand, rising range behind range, and deep blue in colour, while to the west of them the peak of Lövchen, with the chapel on its flat summit, was visible over all. On the opposite side of the lake were seen the lofty mountains inhabited by the Hotti and Clementi, two of the fiercest and most powerful of the Christian Albanian tribes. After night-fall a slight head-wind arose, and our boatmen, who were tired with rowing and singing innumerable *piesmas* (some of Mirkho's, probably, for the word *Grahova* and the name of the Sultan continually recurred), declared that

the boat could not live in such a sea, and put in at the little village of Seltza on the mainland, close to the frontier of Turkey and Montenegro. Here they moored the boat, and very soon were all asleep.

The mode of catching the scoranzi, of which fish there are great quantities in this lake, has been described by Count Karaczay and other authorities, and the truth of their accounts, strange as they are, was confirmed to us at Scodra. The Count's description is as follows:²—"It is about the size of a herring, and enters the lake in autumn from the river Boyana: it is then found in astonishing numbers. There are places in the lake which have a smooth bottom, and present, besides, the appearance of springs issuing from the earth. These places, called *oko*, are visited by the scoranzi when the weather becomes cold, because the temperature of the springs is more elevated than that of the waters of the lake: their number is then so great in these places, that an oar pushed into the water remains fixed. The *oko* are the property of a few individuals, chiefly Turks, and are, at the beginning of the cold season, surrounded by nets, in which an incredible quantity of fish is taken: they are dried, and form a considerable article of commerce." I have already mentioned that they are exported from Montenegro.

At one o'clock in the morning we roused our sleeping crew, and once more got under way. The wind had fallen, and, as there was no moon, the stars were wonderfully bright; Venus in particular, which, hung in the eastern sky, threw a broad trail of light across the water. When daylight came, we found the western shore of the lake, along which we were coasting, extremely bare, but

² 'Journal of Geographical Society,' vol. xxii. p. 57.

some of the distant mountains of Albania, which rose to the south-east, showed magnificent forms. At one place, where a few rocks stood out from the middle of the water at no great distance from us, we saw a number of large birds singularly like pelicans ; and we were afterwards told that this bird is found on the lake of Scodra. One of our boatmen fired his pistol at them, and the bullet fell in the water just below the rocks on which they were resting, after which they flew lazily away. The heat of the day had become intense, when about ten o'clock we found that we had reached the exit of the river Boyana, which in a short course of twenty miles carries the waters of the lake into the Adriatic. We passed a steamer belonging to the Pasha, which is intended to play a prominent part in carrying troops, in case of another war breaking out between the Turks and Montenegrins, and, before reaching the landing-place, made our way through a number of enclosures for catching fish, which intersect the stream in all directions at a variety of angles, with huts erected at intervals above the water, being supported from below on stakes, in which the people live who superintend the fishery. They brought forcibly to our minds the lacustrine habitations of which such considerable remains have been discovered in the Swiss lakes.

CHAPTER XIII.

SCODRA AND THE MIRDITA.

Bazaars and City of Scodra — Vendetta — Turkish Toleration — Turks and Montenegrins — Ismael Pasha — The Castle — View from it — Sieges — Departure for the Mirdita — The Drin — First Impressions of the Mirdita — Night-bivouac — Mirdite Dress — Extensive Oak-forests — The Priest of St. George — Religious Views of the People — Their Fanaticism — Rivers of the Country — Arrival at Orosch.

ON landing from our boat we at once entered the bazaars of Scodra, which are built at a distance of two miles from the modern city, in a low and unhealthy position by the river side, at the foot of the castle hill,—a steep isolated mass of rock, which rises finely from the plain with a striking outline. Our first thought was to purchase saddles and other equipments for our journey into the interior. And here I may remark, for the information of future travellers, that it is not advisable to use English saddles in Turkey, because, whether rightly or not, the people of the country have the strongest objection to them, believing that they injure the backs of their horses. It is far better to purchase a padded Turkish saddle in the first large town on your route, taking care to select one with the slightest peak that you can find, together with a surcingle, as well as girths, and a crupper. It is well, however, to take stirrups and stirrup leathers from England, as the Turkish ones are often awkward and untrustworthy. A number of rough horse-hair saddle-bags of various sizes will also be found extremely useful, and can be met with everywhere in Turkey. In the

larger ones you can stow your luggage, by which means an infinity of trouble is saved in loading your baggage-horse ; and the smaller ones, which can be thrown across the peak of the saddle, serve to carry provisions and any other etceteras. After providing ourselves with these and a few other articles, we proceeded over dilapidated roads and by the sides of broken bridges, which once spanned the numerous watercourses, to the city, if that name can properly be applied to a place where the houses are built so far apart, and so embowered in trees, that more than two or three can seldom be seen in one view. Yet Scodra is said to contain a population of 27,000 souls, and is by far the most important place of all this part of Turkey. It can even boast a very fair Locanda.

In the course of the day we visited the British Consul, Mr. Read, who gave us a good deal of information about the state of the country, and kindly assisted us in arranging our plans for the next stage of our journey. He described the continual *vendetta* as being the bane of this whole district. Though the condition of things is not as outrageous as formerly, yet with an average of one murder every week in the city and its neighbourhood, arising from this cause, it can be conceived how little real security there is to human life. The authorities do what they can to prevent it, but in all probability no method would be effectual short of exiling the whole family of the murderer. From time to time, when the confusion becomes intolerable, it is a custom, handed down from ancient times, for a general truce to be proclaimed, when the persons who have the right to exercise the *vendetta* are required to appear before the heads of their tribes or the local governors, and swear that they will abstain from vengeance. M. Hecquard, who was formerly French

Consul at Scodra, mentions that in 1857, in consequence of no truce having been proclaimed for thirteen years, no less than 500 persons belonging to the city of Scodra alone were wandering about in the neighbouring plain and mountains as being compromised.¹ But even the alleviation of the evil which is produced in this way is, as may be supposed, but partial and of short duration.

Mr. Read expressed his belief that the Turkish authorities here are anxious to carry out a system of religious toleration, and mentioned, as a proof of this, that whereas until lately the only place where the Christians of Scodra were allowed to meet for worship was a field in the suburbs, a church is now in course of erection in the plain. My companion enquired whether the evidence of Christians was received in the courts of justice. He replied in the negative; the Pasha, he thought, was a fair man, and wished them to be heard, but as soon as he proposed it, the Cadi would retire, and without his signature the verdict becomes void. The same is the case in the *medjlis*, or council. Within a few years the Pasha has nominated amongst its members two Christians, one a representative of the Latin, the other of the Greek community; but from fear of ill-usage they are absolute cyphers, and wholly unable to prevent injurious measures. Whatever political influence is exercised by any foreign power on the Christians of North Albania is in the hands of Austria, from which country almost all the Roman Catholic bishops come: the priests who are introduced from that country he regarded as being injurious, from

¹ Hecquard, 'La Haute Albanie,' p. 380. This book, though frequently inaccurate, as every one on the spot maintained, and we ourselves discovered, comprises a great deal of valuable information, and is the only authority on the subject. I have made considerable use of the historical notices it contains. The large map which accompanies it is almost worthless.

the political ferments which they occasionally cause, and the jealousy they arouse among the native priests. As to the relations of the Turks and Montenegrins, he seemed to think they were in a very precarious position, and that war might break out any day. There were faults on both sides. The Turks were unreasonably hard in pressing points with regard to the frontier line, and similar questions, and if the British embassy at Constantinople were to urge them to a more conciliatory course, it was highly probable they would consent. On the other hand, the Montenegrins were ever ready to take up a matter, however slight, and make it a cause of quarrel. Not long before this the Austrian Government had made them a present (not a very judicious one) of 1500 rifles, immediately after which a movement was felt all along the frontier, and though nothing ultimately came of it, yet it was enough to cause an uneasy sensation. The Turks maintain that according to the last convention Mirkho has no right to live any longer in the country, whereas he is dignified with the offices of President of the Senate and Commander-in-chief of the Army.²

In company with Mr. Read, we paid a visit to Ismael Pasha, the governor of this province, who was one of Omer Pasha's officers, an able and strong-handed man, and in good repute even among the Montenegrins. We found him sitting with the Russian consul in the garden of his serai, where he welcomed us in a very friendly manner, and entertained us with coffee, sherbet, and the never-failing cigarettes. Like most Pashas, he is exces-

² The rights of the case are as follows. In the original draft of the Convention of Scutari, in 1862, it was arranged that Mirkho should be banished from the country; but this article was subsequently modified, and it was agreed that he should remain, on condition of his holding no office in the State. See Ubicini, 'Les Serbes de Turquie,' p. 273, where the text of the Convention is given.

sively fat, and had the strongly-marked features of the Osmanli. He is confident, we were told, that in case of a war he could easily penetrate to Cetinjé, and subdue the Montenegrins ; but when I looked at his portly frame, and thought of the passes above Rieka, I felt not a little doubtful whether he would accomplish the task in person. He was proud, and with reason, considering the time of year, of the flowers in his garden ; they were mostly nasturtiums and other gay plants, for the Turks delight in gaudy colours. The soil of this plain is excellent, both for flowers and vegetables ; the violets and other wild flowers in spring are described as magnificent ; but owing to the ignorance of the people, very few kinds of vegetables are grown, except gourds ; and their potatoes, as I have said, are imported from Montenegro. Ismael's brass band was in attendance, and played a number of airs, partly Italian, partly Turkish, very fairly ; but as no Turk has any ear, their style of playing was better suited to the latter, which has that peculiarly raw, half-discordant sound which is characteristic of all Oriental music. How cleverly Beethoven has imitated it in his Turkish March in the 'Ruins of Athens ! '

On our expressing a wish to visit the castle, the Pasha sent one of his aides-de-camp to accompany us. We found the fortifications in a ruinous state in many parts ; they are, in fact, those of the old Servian fortress, dating from the time when Upper Albania, under the title of the province of Rascia, formed a part of the Servian kingdom. But, from the isolated position of the lofty rock on which it stands, the view is a very remarkable one. To the north extends the wide expanse of the lake, its eastern shore bounded by level land or gradual slopes extending to the foot of the mountains of the Hotti and

Clementi, while on the opposite side rises the grand rocky wall that separates it from the sea, the last spurs of which sink into the plain at our feet on the right bank of the Boyana, thus terminating the long limestone chain which skirts the Adriatic throughout the whole length of Dalmatia and Montenegro. The river,—which, as it passes the bazaars, is spanned by a long ricketty wooden bridge,—winds away through level ground in the direction of the Adriatic, whose waters may be seen far off through an opening in the hills ; and just after it has skirted the castle hill, it receives the combined streams of two other rivers. One of these, the Chiri, flows on the south side of the city, and is a source of continual anxiety to the inhabitants from its winter inundations, which threaten sooner or later to sweep away the whole place. The other is a branch of the Drin, which broke away from the main river two years before our visit, and taking a northerly course forced its way as far as this point. So seriously may the face of a country be injured, where barbarism and neglect prevail ! At the foot of the castle on the south side, and separated from the bazaars by a rocky hill, are the half-ruined houses of the old town of Scodra ; while the modern city stretches over a considerable part of the plain to the east, having the appearance of a sea of trees, with minarets and other lofty buildings rising out of it, a most picturesque sight. Far away to the south-east appeared the snow-capped mountains of the Mirdite Albanians ; and directly to the east, rising over the nearer ranges, a group of striking peaks in the direction of Ipek, one of them pyramidal in form. Of these peaks, which were the Bertiscus of ancient times, we shall hear more as we proceed.

The castle height on which we are standing was the

site of the original town of Scodra, for this name, which has been transformed into Scutari³ by the Italians, signifies “on the hill.” At different periods of history it has been a place of considerable importance, and has sustained numerous sieges. The first of these is mentioned by Livy, who describes the place as difficult of access, and the best fortified town in the country, and surrounded by two rivers, the Clausula (Chiri) on the east, and the Barbana (Boyana) on the west, the latter of which flows from the *Palus Labcatis* (lake of Scodra).⁴ On this occasion Gentius, the last king of Illyria, having provoked the hostility of the Romans by his piracies, was attacked and besieged by the Roman Praetor Anicius, and after an unsuccessful sally, compelled to surrender at discretion; after which Illyria became a Roman province (B.C. 168). To pass over a number of minor sieges, it was again the scene of an important conflict in the year 1478, when the Venetians, to whom it had been ceded by Scanderbeg

³ I have all along avoided this form of the name, in order to distinguish this place from the better-known Scutari on the Bosphorus.

⁴ Livy, xliv. 31. The remainder of this passage is as obscure and confusing, as the earlier part is clear:—“Duo cingunt eam flumina, Clausula latere urbis, quod in orientem patet, profluens, Barbanna ab regione occidentis, ex Labeatide palude oriens. Hi duo amnes confluentes incident Oriundi flumini, quod ortum ex monte Scordo, multis et aliis auctum aquis, mari Hadriatico infertur. Mons Scordus, longè altissimus regionis ejus, ab oriente Dardaniam subjectam habet, a meridie Macedoniam, ab occasu Illyricum.” As the Drin is the only other river in this neighbourhood, and rises in the Schar-dagh, or Scardus, the position of which, between Dardania, in the neighbourhood of the Axius, and Illyricum, is so clearly pointed out, it is reasonable to suppose that Oriundi, a word of suspicious sound, is an error of the author or transcriber for Drilon, or Drinio, the ancient name of that river, and that Livy made the mistake of supposing that the Boyana fell into the Drin. Another authority, Vibius Sequester, (‘De Fluminibus,’ s.v. Barbana, quoted by Grisebach, ‘Reise durch Rumelien,’ ii. 118), distinctly states that the Barbana flowed into the sea. But it is curious that Livy should have so nearly anticipated the present state of things when a connexion actually exists between the two rivers.

by a secret convention which came into force after his death, were blockaded there by Mahomet II. for nine months, and only yielded it to him in consequence of a treaty of peace being signed. And to come nearer to our own times, it was the head-quarters of Mahmoud Pasha, or Mahmoud the Black, as he is more commonly called, who in the latter half of the eighteenth century held a similar position in Northern Albania to that which Ali of Yanina afterwards held in the south ; and who, after long defying the Ottomans from whom he had revolted, and cutting in pieces the detachments which they sent against him, was ultimately defeated and slain by the Montenegrins under their Vladika Peter I., into whose mountains in an evil hour he had penetrated (A.D. 1796). One of his successors, Mustapha, a man of less ability, but for a time not less formidable, again declared himself independent of the central government, and taking advantage of the time when Sultan Mahmoud's power had been weakened by his war with Russia and the unpopularity of his internal reforms, induced a large number of the neighbouring chieftains to join his standard, and marched against the Turkish forces. But the general who was sent against him, Mehemet Reshid Pasha, though the forces at his command were considerably inferior, was a man of far greater capacity. Mustapha was first defeated in the field, and then forced to shut himself up in this fortress, where, after sustaining a siege and bombardment, he was compelled to surrender by the explosion of his powder magazine (A.D. 1832). Since that time the Ottoman flag has waved peacefully over its battlements.

The next point that we intended to make for in our journey was the country of the Mirdites, whose mountains I have mentioned as visible from the castle. They have the reputation of being the fiercest and most

warlike of all the Albanians, and have never been subdued by the Turks, of whom they are absolutely independent, being governed by a Prince of their own, who is a descendant of Scanderbeg. They are the hereditary enemies of the Montenegrins ; and it was strange to think that within so short a distance we should visit two Christian peoples so strongly contrasted with one another, differing in race, political organization, and even religion, for the Mirdites are all Roman Catholics. We were doubtful before arriving at Scodra whether it would be possible for us to enter their country, but as the Prince has a residence in that city, Mr. Read had become acquainted with him, and undertook to provide us with an introduction. He found on enquiry that a servant or messenger of Bib Doda (such is the Prince's name) was about to start on the morrow for Orosch, his mountain residence, with despatches from Ismael Pasha and other commissions ; and accordingly it was arranged that this person should accompany us and act as guide. We hired four horses of an Albanian carrier called Nicola, a fine-looking middle-aged man, and in every respect a most capital fellow, far superior to the ordinary run of carriers and muleteers : in the first instance we agreed to take him as far as Prisrend, but, as we found his horses very fair, and himself all that we could desire, we ultimately went through with him all the way to Salonica.

Shortly after midday we left the city. Our path ran in a south-easterly direction along a plain near the foot of a range of mountains, and was bordered by agnus-castus bushes, pomegranates, palluria, and other shrubs, festooned here and there by the wild vine : the land on both sides was fairly cultivated, in some places corn being grown, in others vines and mulberry trees, and in one spot I saw a patch of tobacco. In two hours and

a half we reached the main stream of the Drin, from which the branch that has made its way to Scodra separates lower down: at this point it is from 100 to 150 yards wide, a rushing turbid current, very different from the pellucid river which, on our former journey, we had seen issue from the Lake of Ochrida. About half-way between these two points it receives the waters of the White Drin, which rises in the mountains of Ipek and flows from north to south, after which the combined streams take a westerly course towards the sea. From the appearance of its bed it must have a wider stream in the winter. Here there is a ferry, and considering that this is the high road between Scodra and Prisrend, the ferry-boat is of a most primitive description. It is composed of two boats of no great size fastened together, each of which is made out of one piece of wood (*monoxyla* the Greeks call them), and is paddled for some distance up the stream with instruments more resembling spades than oars, and then drifted across to the other side. When horses are ferried over they are arranged cross-wise, with their fore-feet in one boat and their hind-feet in the other. Above the ferry the rocks close in and form a narrow gorge, which extends for a distance of not less than sixty miles up the course of the stream, with such precipitous sides that it is impossible for any road to follow in that direction. We were informed that it had been explored in the previous year by Von Hahn, with the object of discovering whether it could be rendered navigable, but that he found the rapids so numerous and so steep as to make the attempt to utilize it hopeless.⁵ In consequence of this, the high road to

⁵ It is even said that in one part there is a waterfall 150 feet high. See the account given by a Turkish officer in an Appendix to Von Hahn's 'Reise von Belgrad nach Salonik,' p. 207.

Prisrend has to pass for several days' journey over excessively steep and rugged ground some way to the south of the river, having on one side the wild tribe of the Ducadjini, and on the other the Mirdites, part of whose territory it traverses in the most difficult portion of the route. This is one great source of the influence of that people, and a cause of their independence, for no sooner have they a grievance to complain of, or any difference with the Turks, than they infest this road and render it impassable, thereby destroying commerce, cutting off supplies, and, what is still more important, hindering reinforcements being sent from the interior in case of a war with Montenegro. This route has been described by Dr. Grisebach, who passed this way in 1839.

After crossing the river we stopped by a solitary khan on the opposite bank to wait for our Albanian guide, who had left Scodra later than ourselves, and was to overtake us here. We made our dinner off provisions which we had brought with us, having being warned beforehand that we should find nothing, except perhaps coffee and spirits, at the miserable hovels which are built at intervals along the main road, and form the only accommodation for the traveller between Scodra and Prisrend. Nevertheless, as this is the only line of communication by which the produce of a large inland district can be brought to the sea, the amount of traffic is very considerable, as we could see from the number of well-laden horses bearing merchandize which passed us on the way. When Bib Doda's messenger arrived we again started, and followed the track until it began to ascend into the mountains, near which point was a small Christian church with some pretensions to architecture and rough ornamental stone-work. Here we left it, and skirted the edge of the plain of Zadrima, which stretches

southwards in the direction of Alessio, forming the boundary of the Mirdita on this side. We soon found our native guide indispensable, for the slight traces of a path vanished when we came to the broad shingly bed of a river called Djadri, which we followed upwards, frequently crossing and recrossing the shallow stream, which from the appearance of its channel must at times be swelled into a furious torrent. On one side the rocks were of limestone—the last of this formation which we saw until reaching Orosch—on the other they appeared igneous, which, according to Grisebach, is the character of the greater part of this mountain mass south of the Drin. These last, as well as the débris that had fallen from them, were of a deep red colour, so that, as evening approached, the shadows that were thrown along them by the trees on their sides assumed a rich purple hue. We were now within the territory of the Mirdites, and the wildness of the scenery harmonized well with all that we had heard of the character of the natives. Here and there, however, gentle nooks appeared, where bright green poplars, with patches of maize and small vine-yards, gave an aspect of cultivation; and the cows coming up from the water, and the sheep *following* the shepherd, as in the parable, suggested thoughts of rural life, though these were somewhat marred by the long gun which the shepherd carried on his shoulder. At one point, where the river makes a considerable bend, an armed party suddenly appeared from behind a mass of rock which projected above the valley, and, after hailing us, enquired where we were going. Our guide was not with us, having made a detour into the mountains to avoid wading the stream, but Nicola satisfied them by shouting that we were on our way to visit the Prince. At last, about nightfall, we left the river and mounted

to a small upland plain, in which was a solitary house, where our Albanian proposed that we should stop: but as it had been arranged that he should take us to a priest's house in the village of Castagneti, which was said to be not far distant, and our time was precious, we resolved to proceed thither. Having mounted him on one of our horses, we stumbled along behind him by the light of the stars, over very rough places, while he extemporized a way so cleverly and with such perfect nonchalance, that we were deceived into the idea that he knew where he was going, until suddenly he disappeared, horse and all, down a bank five feet high. On reappearing unhurt he confessed that he was wholly out of his reckoning, and condescended to go off in the direction of a light which we saw at no great distance, and which proved to proceed from a shepherds' encampment. From them we learnt that Castagneti was in a wholly different direction, and that we had no chance of reaching it that night: so we unloaded our horses and turned them loose into the neighbouring grass, and having lighted a fire and partaken of a scanty supper, lay down to rest under a spreading ash-tree, and were soon fast asleep.

On waking the next morning we found at our heads a large cross carved on the bark of the tree, a sure sign that we were among Christians. Around us was a pretty glade, surrounded by oak brushwood and dwarf pines, and hard by ran a narrow stream, down the steep side of which our man had tumbled the night before. The shepherds were an uncouth-looking set, and, like all the Mirdites, excessively plainly dressed, in which respect they are a great contrast to the other gay Albanians, and especially to those of Scodra, in whose rich costumes there is a tasteful mixture of white and

red, while the women wear a large crimson cloak with a covering for the head, reminding one of the costume which old women used to wear in England. Amongst the Mirdites the dress of the men consists of a long white woollen coat, which serves also for a shirt, fastened round the waist by a red belt; underneath this are white pantaloons of the same material, tied with ornamented bands about the ankle: their feet are protected by shoes of hide, and their heads by a close-fitting cap of white felt. Their women present a more picturesque appearance, as, in addition to a coat similar to that of the men, they wear red trousers, an embroidered apron with a fringe eighteen inches long, and a blue handkerchief twisted round the head. They are a wiry, active people, but small in stature; indeed they appeared to us quite pygmies after seeing the Montenegrins: their faces are sharp and keen, with a rough expression, but by no means an unpleasant one, for they are less wild and cruel-looking than the other Ghegs. They shave all the head except the back part, where the hair is allowed to grow to its full length (*ὅπιθεν κομόωντες*); and from this and other customs of theirs, which are generally characteristic of the Mahometan races in Turkey, the stranger finds it hard at first to persuade himself that they are Christians.

The undulating country over which we passed after leaving our night's resting-place was covered with oak-trees, which are the characteristic vegetation of the north and west of the Mirdita. It is described by Dr. Grisebach as being universally found in the neighbourhood of his route, and the dense masses of it which we saw extended as far as the eye could reach; nowhere else in Europe, in all probability, are such extensive oak forests to be found. After gradually ascending for three hours,

we reached San Giorgio, where there is a church and a priest's residence ; in former times, when the inhabitants of this district had reason to fear hostilities from the Turks,—in fact, until quite lately,—this was the seat of the Bishop of the Mirdites ; of late years, however, since they have been on good terms with their neighbours, he has removed to a place in the plain of Zadrima, not far distant from Alessio.⁶ The little church is of the rudest description ; the sun shines through the rafters, and not only is there no church furniture, but there is not even a regular altar, the place of which is taken by a ledge of stone in a tiny apse which is scooped out of the eastern wall ; outside the west end there is a similar ledge, where the service is celebrated on great festivals, such as St. George's day, when two or three thousand people are gathered together. This was once the metropolitan cathedral. We betook ourselves to the priest's house, which stood on a little eminence hard by, but the doors were barred, and all our shouting and knocking elicited no responses except the loud barking of dogs. When we were on the point of going away in despair, the priest himself, Don Nicola Bianchi, appeared, having come in from the fields where he had been working. *Don* is the title applied to all the priests throughout this country. He was a jolly, broad-shouldered, bustling little man, dressed in a costume anything but ecclesiastical, which however is the regular dress of the Mirdite priests—a red fez cap, a cloth jacket, and full blue trousers gathered in below the knee, like those worn by Greek sailors. He spoke Italian, like all the priests of this country, who learn it at Scodra, a circumstance which we found extremely serviceable, as we could in this way hold direct

⁶ The Bishop of Alessio seems also to have some authority in this country, but of what character it was we could not discover.

communication with them. He expressed himself greatly delighted at seeing us, and in a surprisingly short time had washed his floor, made coffee, killed a lamb, and prepared a good dinner, for which the mountain air had duly qualified our appetites. Of this he did not himself partake, as it was the vigil of St. James's day, but he greatly enjoyed the bread, cheese, and tobacco, which we had brought with us from Scodra, for his own bread was of maize and roughly baked, and his tobacco of a very coarse description. He was proud of his wine, which he said the Prince himself had praised, and of his water, which he considered the lightest and best in the Mirdita. The room in which he entertained us had a decidedly martial aspect, from the number of guns and pistols hung about the walls ; these apparently are not unnecessary, for when he showed us round his premises, he described how, a few years ago, he was obliged to cut down all the trees and bushes in the neighbourhood of the house, on account of the robbers who concealed themselves there. Besides this sitting-room he had a kitchen and a bedroom, in which were several books of devotion ; all these were on the upper storey, for the lower part was occupied by stables and outhouses. In the garden close by, a large bell is suspended in a frame, and serves to call the people to church.

Don Nicola had served as Chaplain-General of the Mirdite forces under Bib Doda, in the campaign in Bulgaria, at the commencement of the Russian war, when he led 1200 men to the assistance of the Sultan,—as auxiliaries, however, for, unlike the rest of the Albanians, the Mirdites never serve as mercenaries. He was present at the battle of Giurgevo and the siege of Silistria, where he remembered the heroic Captain Butler. For these services he had received a decoration of the 3rd order of

the Medjidie, which he showed us, together with a *firman* from the Sultan, written in gilt letters. "Ah ! you should have seen me," he said, "as I charged at the head of my men, with the cross in my hand !" "And a sword, perhaps, in the other?" I suggested. He laughed, but would not plead guilty to the soft impeachment. He expressed himself anxious to get an English Crimean medal, for though he had not been in the Crimea, yet he had taken part in the war, and he knew others who had received them in different parts of the country. The Prince was evidently a great object of admiration with him, and he described him to us as a *bravo giovine*.

In answer to our enquiries our host informed us that there is a large quantity of metals in the country,—lead, iron, and silver; also coal, though it had never been worked, but some of the surface coal was so good that they could boast that a steamer had once made a voyage with it. Besides these, the resin which is extracted from their pine-trees might be made an article of commerce, together with the timber, of which they have so inexhaustible a supply; yet none is exported except the *scodano*, which is used in dyeing. As to his own profession, he told us that there are thirteen priests in the country, all of whom are native Albanians, except one, who is an Italian. The number of course is extremely small for a scattered population of more than 20,000 souls, but the churches are more numerous, and services are held from time to time in different places. These the people attend in great numbers, and they are careful in observing the fasts and festivals, but how superficial their Christianity is may be gathered from a fact which I heard at Orosch, that many of them are accustomed to pray to our Lord to intercede for them with St. Nicolas, who is the leading saint of the country. Having touched

on their religion, I may as well take the opportunity of saying a few more words about that subject. They are an extremely fanatical people, and will not under any circumstances allow a Mahometan to settle among them, nor is any insult offered to their religion suffered to pass unavenged. M. Hecquard relates, that at the time when the Pasha of Scodra opposed the building of a Roman Catholic seminary for priests, which was being constructed in that place under Austrian auspices, and caused the walls that had been partly raised to be thrown down, the Mirdites prepared to descend into the plain to destroy a mosque, in requital of the wrong done to their faith, and that he himself met a body of 300 of them starting on such an expedition, and with difficulty persuaded them to abstain, by pointing out to them the persecutions they were likely to bring on their fellow Christians in the plains.⁷ At what exact time this country finally attached itself to the Latin Church it is hard to say, for having belonged first to the Byzantine empire, and then to the Servian kingdom, and, on the other hand, from its proximity to Italy, having at an early period had sees founded in it from Rome, Upper Albania was for many centuries the scene of continual struggles between the eastern and western communions, and swayed backwards and forwards from one to the other, according as force or policy required. Roman Catholic writers fix the date at which the change took place at A.D. 1250, quoting two letters of Innocent IV., in which he states that the whole of the province of Albania, following the example of their bishop, had joined the Catholic Church;⁸ but there is evidence to

⁷ Hecquard, ‘La Haute Albanie,’ p. 225.

⁸ Baronius, as quoted by Hahn, ‘Albanesische Studien,’ vol. i. p. 343, note²⁰⁷.

show that the Greek Church exercised a powerful influence in these parts until a much later period. Even at the present day a number of Greek observances remain embodied in the Latin rite, the most remarkable of which is the communion in both kinds.

San Giorgio is by the barometer 2070 feet above the sea ; and from its commanding situation the view is one of the finest in the country. Far away to the north-west the castle of Scodra and its lake were clearly visible ; the rest was a grand mountain panorama, the chief points in which were the conical Monte Veglia to the west, on the other side of which lies Alessio, and to the south-east the lofty peak of Mount Dyia, patched with snow, the highest summit in the Mirdita. The whole was harmonized by the soft blue of a midday haze.

Seeing a chestnut tree close by the house, I enquired whether any were found at Castagneti, the place where we were to have passed the previous night. Don Nicola answered that there were several there, and that, as I had supposed, the name of the village was almost certainly derived from the Italian name for the tree. It is one of many instances of the way in which words and names in that language have filtrated into the Albanian ; thus *prift*, the Albanian for “priest,” comes undoubtedly from that source, and our host’s surname had distinctly an Italian sound. Speaking of Castagneti he also told us that in the neighbourhood of that place is the site of Castri, the birthplace of Scanderbeg, from which he derived his name of George Castriote.

Having taken an affectionate farewell of our hospitable entertainer, who would hardly hear of our not passing the night with him, we pursued our way through a country

of exquisite beauty, at one time penetrating into the loveliest dells imaginable, at another crossing the uplands, from which the eye ranged over a wide extent of mountains, whose sides and slopes seem clothed with velvet from their unbroken covering of oak foliage. Shortly after leaving San Giorgio we first caught sight of the village of Orosch, some twenty miles distant in a direct line to the east, and appearing like a white spot in the midst of a triangular patch of cultivation lying in an open gully, which seamed the side of the distant mountain chain. From this point we descended first to the river Sperthoz, and again, after crossing an intervening range of hills, to the greater Fandi, the main stream of the country, which receives the waters of all the other rivers of this part of the Mirdita, except those on its northern frontier, which fall into the Drin. The Fandi in turn drains into the Matja, which flows from the district called the Mat, on the southern confines of the Mirdites, and enters the sea some way south of Alessio. By the fords of the Sperthoz and the Fandi we saw remains of bridges, testifying to the existence of more frequent communication in former times. After the passage of the latter of these rivers a very long and steep ascent succeeds, where a winding-path leads up the face of a rocky wall ; when this is surmounted, as we descend again towards the deep valley of the lesser Fandi, the trees become less numerous, and vegetation continually decreases as we follow its stream upwards in the direction of Orosch. At last we struck up a side valley through the bed of a tributary stream, and about nine o'clock saw a bright light gleaming through the darkness, which we were told proceeded from the palace. Towards this we made our way, stumbling along over

a rugged track, in the midst of the flashing light of numerous fire-flies, until at last we passed through a gateway, and entering a courtyard found ourselves in front of the dwelling of Prince Bib. While our letter of introduction is being read, and preparation made for our reception, let me endeavour to describe it.

The palace or castle of Orosch is an ideal residence of a mountain chieftain, and both the building itself and the life enacted within it carried our thoughts back in many respects to the wildest times of the Middle Ages. The walls are massively constructed of stone, with loopholes at intervals, for purposes of defence, and the whole structure forms an irregular oblong, one end or wing of which is occupied by the Prince and his family. This part we did not enter, for the women were kept in as complete seclusion as in a Turkish harem ; of the rest, the ground floor is taken up with stables, while a flight of stone steps leads up to a large hall, open to the air in front, which occupies the greater part of the upper storey. From the roof of this was suspended an iron frame, containing pieces of resinous pine-wood, whose bright flame sent forth the light that we had seen on our approach. The walls on three sides of it were hung with long guns, richly set with silver and beautifully polished, for this is the occupation of the men, while the women perform the more menial offices. At the back of this are large unfurnished chambers occupied by the retainers and guards, who, from their fierce look and the long locks that streamed from the backs of their heads, appeared some of the wildest of the human race ; and its sides are flanked by two good-sized rooms, one of which formed the dining-hall, while the other was appropriated to our use as a bedroom. Both of these are roofed with the



OROSCH; RESIDENCE OF THE MIROITE PRINCE.

pinewood of the mountains, which was fragrant as cedar and beautifully carved. Round the walls, about a third of the way down, runs a cornice of the same material, below which stand handsome buffets for containing valuables. The windows are small, and carefully guarded with iron bars, and the hearths are open, the chimney not commencing until near the roof, which in consequence is blackened with smoke.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MIRDITA (*continued*).

The Mirdite Prince—History of his Family—Political Constitution of the Mirdita—Administration of Justice—Fraternal Friendships—Ravages of the Vendetta—The Prince's Hospitality—Derivation of the name Mirdite—Excursion to the Monte Santo—View from it—Topography of the Country—Capture of Wives—McLennan on ‘Primitive Marriage’—Prevalence of the Custom of Exogamy—Bride-racing—Mirdite Wives Mahometans.

As we were almost the only Europeans who had visited Orosch within the memory of its inhabitants, we were received with great distinction. Having been ushered into the dining-hall we found the Prince waiting to welcome us, which he did with profuse offers of hospitality, and apologies for the roughness of the entertainment we should meet with. He excused himself from supping with us, as it was a fast-day, and after a time retired, leaving us to the care of his aide-de-camp, Ali Bey, a Hungarian by birth, and an officer in the Turkish army, and his secretary, Dr. Theodore Finzi, an Italian. Here again, as in Montenegro, we were fortunate in falling in with educated people, who could furnish us with the information we required, for both these gentlemen spoke Italian, and M. Finzi French also. Of the latter gentleman in particular I may say, that he was not only an agreeable companion, but remarkably well informed about the circumstances and statistics of the country. The party was completed by Don Giorgio, a rather sinister-looking man, the priest of a neighbouring village, who was staying there on a visit.

Prenk Bib Doda is a powerfully built man of about forty years of age, with a dark olive complexion, prominent bony features, and an unintelligent expression of countenance. He is described by those who are acquainted with him as one to whom fear is unknown, and he has greatly distinguished himself in several campaigns in which he has assisted the Turkish Government—in Southern Albania, against the Montenegrins, and finally in the campaign on the Danube in 1854, where the prowess of the Mirdites was conspicuous. In recognition of his services on this last occasion he received from the Porte the title of Pasha, a dignity, however, which is, rather lightly esteemed in his own country, though he wears the dress of an officer of that rank. The title of Prenk, which is prefixed to his name, though it is in reality a Christian name, being another form of Peter, has come to be regarded, even among his own people, as equivalent to Prince. "*Vous le trouverez un peu barbare,*" M. Finzi observed to us, apologetically; and it is true that he can neither read nor write, and speaks no language but his native Albanian, though he understood a good deal of what we said in Italian; but he is reported to have a good influence in the country, while a more civilized man might very possibly have no influence at all.

Under the same roof where we were quietly passing the night, a series of domestic tragedies had been enacted not very long before, hardly unworthy of the palace of Atreus at Mycenæ. To give the reader some idea of these, it is necessary to go back to the early history of the existing family. The ancestor to whom they principally refer as the head of their dynasty was Gion Marcu (John Mark), a renowned warrior, who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century, and having gained

great fame by his success against the Turks, lent his assistance, for which a high price was paid, to the native Pashas in their resistance to the central government. It was he who first established his residence at Orosch. After his death he was succeeded by his eldest son, Prenk Lech I. (Peter Alexander), who like him made war his profession and was killed in battle, leaving three sons, Prenk Lech II., Dod Lech, and Lech Sii (Alexander the Black); it is with these, as the ancestors of the existing members of the family, that we are most directly concerned. And here I may notice how often the shortened form of the name of Alexander occurs in these records, as it does also in the names of Lesendria, the island in the Lake of Scodra, in Alessio,¹ and in other names found in these parts. In some cases this is probably to be referred to the national recollection of Scanderbeg.

Prenk Lech II., the eldest of the three, who succeeded his father as chief of the Mirdites by right of birth, at first allied himself with Mahmoud the Black of Scodra, and was with him in Montenegro at the time of his death. At a later period, he put his arms at the disposal of Ali Pasha of Yanina, and when Mustapha Pasha of Scodra became a formidable rival to that potentate, at Ali's instigation he became a thorn in his side, continually ravaging the plain of Zadrima, and pillaging the villages of the Mussulmans, until at last he was bought off by the payment of a sum of money. Like most of his race, he died of the wounds he received in fight, leaving his command to his son, Prenk Doda, the grandfather of the present Prince. This chieftain is reported to have shown himself intelligent and humane as well as brave,

¹ The name of this town appears to be a corruption of the ancient name of Lissus; but its Albanian name of Lesch is, at all events, adapted to the local form of the name Alexander.

but his tenure of power was of short duration, for after fighting in the Morea at the time of the Greek revolution, he was poisoned by a Turkish woman at Scodra, and is buried at Cattaro, to which place he had gone in hopes of obtaining medical aid. His legitimate successor was his brother Nicola, but as he was a minor, the command was for the time entrusted to his uncle, Lech Sii, the youngest son of Prenk Lech I., and the fiercest and darkest character of his race. After some years, however, this Alexander the Black was exiled to Yanina by order of the Grand Vizir, Mehemet Reshid Pasha, against whom he had sided with Mustapha in his war against the Porte, and was forced to surrender along with that despot at the siege of Scodra. He thus disappears for the present from the scene, and his nephew assumed the command.

It was at this time that the furies of the *vendetta* were let loose on the devoted house, and, as it is said, not without the co-operation of the Turkish authorities, who were only too glad of an opportunity of weakening a powerful neighbour. The sons of Alexander the Black, having seen their father in power, were jealous at the chieftainship having passed into the hands of their cousin, and at the instigation of their father, whom the Pasha of Scodra had promised to recall from exile, laid frequent plots against his life. But Nicola was aware of their machinations, and when he had several times parried their attempts, and at last saw no way of escape for himself except by anticipating the blow, had all three put to death in one day. Directly after this occurrence, the sentence of banishment against Lech Sii was annulled, and he reappeared on the scene, thirsting for vengeance. At first, at the earnest entreaty of the clergy, he consented to be reconciled to his nephew; but

a Mirdite never really forgets that blood has been shed, and accordingly it was not long before he watched an opportunity of taking Nicola unawares, and killed him one day when his back was turned, as he washed his hands before dinner.

The moment had now arrived when the women of the family should take their share in the bloody work. Within a year after this treacherous deed, the murderer himself was slain in the night-time by the wife of his victim ; and on this followed a massacre, set on foot by the wife of Lech Sii in default of any male avenger, from which the present Prince only escaped by being removed from Orosch in the darkness, concealed in a chest. At last, when the family was on the eve of extinction, a truce was established, and as the number of deaths on both sides was found to be equal, they agreed that the past should be forgotten,—that Bib Doda, being the representative of the eldest branch, should be recognised as chieftain,—and that the rest of his relations should dwell with him in the palace which had been the scene of the drama. They are but three in number, two of them being of the second branch, descendants of Dod Lech, the second son of Prenk Lech I., while the third is the son of Alexander the Black, and is said to inherit the ferocity of his father. Together with them live the two murderesses, the wives of Nicola and of Lech Sii.² Such was the happy family into which we were now introduced.

On leaving my room the next morning, I found M. Finzi outside, and proceeded with him to a small kiosk or summer-house, which projects from the front of the hall, and commands an extensive view, reaching almost

² This notice is abridged from Hecquard, pp. 235-242.

to the sea, of the deep valley to the west, while close in front the sloping green maize fields, interspersed with walnut and other trees, and a few cottages, form a refreshing object to the eye. Behind the house the mountain side rises steeply; and in consequence of its western aspect and the gully in which it lies, the place only sees the sun for a few hours in winter, while in summer the heat is excessive during the afternoon. Both in the kiosk, and in a tent which had been set up in the court at the side of the house, I had long conversations with the Secretary at different times of the day: from these the information about the country which I have to communicate to the reader is mainly derived.

The constitution of the Mirdita is a sort of military aristocracy; for though there is a hereditary chief, and an assembly, in which the whole people is represented, yet the power is really vested in the heads of the chief families. All the relatives of the Prince have the title of Captain, and command the divisions of the army under him in time of war; but they have no direct political influence in the country. Each district has its *bayrakdar*, or standard bearer, under whom are the senators. These are the heads of their respective clans, so that the office is hereditary, and a child may be a senator, only in that case his functions are administered by his guardian until he is of age. No measures can be taken without the consent of the bayrakdars and senators; and when matters of the greatest importance have to be discussed, a council of the whole nation is called—that is to say, a representative is sent from each family; but these have practically no influence in the deliberations, and are only summoned in order to give weight to the general decision. When called together by the Prince, this senate meets at Orosch; but they have also the power of

meeting on their own account, in which case their *rendezvous* is a church of St. Paul in another part of the country, which belongs to no parish, but serves for an independent central point for the whole Mirdita. Only two days before our visit one of these parliaments had been held at the palace ; on which occasion three oxen and several sheep and goats had been killed, and great feasting had taken place at Bib Doda's expense. This kind of hospitality is always expected of the chief ; and when he is at Scodra, he keeps open house for any of his tribe who come there, and a sheep is killed every day for the entertainment of the lower classes.

Justice is administered in the different districts by the senators according to the original laws of the Ducadjini, from which tribe, though it has now become Mahometan, the Mirdites consider themselves to be descended. The rigour of these is extreme, and in some cases barbarous, as was shown by an instance that had lately occurred, where a woman who had murdered her husband was sentenced, according to the law, to be burned alive. At the late meeting of the senate the Prince had endeavoured to persuade them to change the punishment and abolish the savage custom, but he did not seem as yet to have carried his point. In many similar ways he appears to be exerting his influence on the side of humanity ; thus the custom of salting and keeping the heads of enemies killed in battle, though it existed later here than among the Montenegrins, is now forbidden. "But you must not think," observed Mr. Finzi, "that severity, not to say violence, is otherwise than necessary in dealing with this wild people. This was forcibly impressed on me by an occurrence that happened shortly after I entered the Prince's service. It was at Constantinople, to which place he

had gone to receive from the Sultan the title of Pasha, taking with him a number of his retainers. One of these, a groom, stayed out very late several nights, contrary to order, and was sharply reprimanded by his master for so doing. One night, however, he repeated the offence, and on his coming in the Prince was greatly enraged, and at once ordered him to receive one hundred blows of the bastinado on his feet. This punishment was inflicted in a room adjoining that in which I was sleeping, and I was horrified at being waked by the shrieks of the miserable creature piercing the stillness of the night. On learning what was going on I was extremely disgusted at such barbarity, and determined to send in my resignation to the Prince the next morning. About daylight, however, two hours after this had happened, I visited the sufferer, and to my surprise found him sitting up and drinking a cup of coffee. As soon as he saw me, he hobbled across the room to me on his mangled soles, kissed my hand, and entreated me,—not, as I had expected, to procure him his escape from such treatment, but—to intercede for him with his master, that he might not be discharged from his service."

The custom of forming fraternal friendships, and having adopted brothers (*pobratim*), is common among the Mirdites, as it is also among some of the other races of European Turkey. According to this, two young men engage to support and aid one another during their lives in all contingencies, whether of war or peace. This relationship, which reminds us of some of the passionate attachments of ancient history, such as those of David and Jonathan, of Achilles and Patroclus, is regarded as of the most sacred and inviolable character, insomuch that in some places, according to M. Hecquard, the children of those who have contracted the alliance are not allowed

to marry one another ; and the same writer mentions the ceremony of initiation observed by some, in which the two persons, after receiving the Communion together, have a small quantity of their blood mixed in a bowl of wine, which is drunk by both when they have sworn an oath of fidelity,—a primitive form of contract mentioned by Herodotus³ as existing among the Lydians and Scythians, and by Tacitus,⁴ as practised by the Armenians and Iberians. It used even to happen that alliances of this sort were formed between persons of different sexes, but this is now of rare occurrence, for “*messieurs les prêtres*,” said the Secretary, appealing for confirmation to Don Giorgio, who was standing by, “find that it often leads to concubinage, and use all their influence to put it down.”

The account he gave of the *vendetta* confirmed all that we had already heard of its ravages. Rightly, indeed, has it been called “the web of murderous feuds at which the barbarian sits all his life weaving, and which he bequeaths to his children.”⁵ The following instance which he mentioned may give an idea of its interminable character. Fifty years ago two men of this country quarrelled, and fought so desperately, that both of them died of the wounds they received. Time rolled on, until it might have been thought that the event was forgotten. But it had happened that as they lay wounded on the ground, one of them had managed to deal the other a blow over the head, which caused him to die first. The recollection of this circumstance had been preserved, and

³ Herod., i. 74; iv. 70.

⁴ Tac., ‘Ann.’ xii. 47. It would also seem to have been found among the Romans, from the existence of the word “assiratum” in Latin, signifying a mixture of wine and blood.

⁵ ‘Ecce Homo,’ p. 299.

only the other day a descendant of the one who died first presented himself before a descendant of the other, and reminded him of the fact, threatening at the same time to burn his whole village unless he gave him one hundred goats by way of satisfaction. The Prince heard of the affair, and, sending for the man, persuaded him to delay his vengeance; but beyond this he could not proceed, for the laws of blood are superior to every other law. Thus the matter stood at the time of our visit. This state of things has given rise to an institution, the existence of which forcibly realises to us the value of a similar establishment among the Jews. A number of the Mirdites who had fled their country as compromised persons from fear of assassination, formed themselves into a colony, and settled in the plain near Prisrend, where they work as labourers. They have since been joined by many others who have left their homes for the same reason, and in this way the place has become a complete city of refuge.

At ten o'clock we breakfasted with the Prince in the dining-hall: the party consisted of the Prince, his aide-de-camp and secretary, Don Giorgio, and ourselves. The entertainment had decidedly a martial appearance, for though the guests were not expected to "carve at the meal with gloves of steel," yet the dishes were handed to us by fierce-looking warriors (among them was one of the captains), with their belts full of pistols and daggers. A German butler, a Prussian by extraction, acted as *major domo*, so that the room contained a curious mixture of nationalities,—Italian, Hungarian, German, English, and Albanian. Before we took our places it was carefully inquired which of us was the elder, that he might be seated on the Prince's right hand: and when breakfast was half over, a boiled lamb's head was brought in on a

dish and placed before our host, who immediately transferred it to my plate, to my no slight astonishment, until it was explained to me that this is the highest compliment in Albania, and is given to the man whom the chief “delighteth to honour.” His idea of hospitality consisted in ordering that we should be helped to as much as possible, and that the silver tankards which were placed before us should be continually refilled with the light wine of the country. Though he often apologized for the roughness of our reception, the viands were excellent, if not much varied. On one occasion he tumbled on to my plate with his own hands half a dishful of mulberries, a fruit which is scarce in these parts; indeed I was surprised to find them at all at such an elevation, for Orosch is 2360 feet above the sea; but there was a fine mulberry-tree growing in front of the building. The quantity of meat forced upon us at length became embarrassing, until we were told that this profuse hospitality was the custom of the country, and a compliment, so that we should give no offence by leaving what we were not inclined for. All this was truly patriarchal, and our thoughts naturally reverted to Benjamin’s mess, the size of which seems at first sight rather a questionable token of fraternal affection when all the party had as much as they could eat. The Prince’s possessions are of an equally patriarchal character, consisting of 800 oxen and cows, 1300 sheep, and a number of horses and other cattle besides. Before the end of the meal, the Prince’s son was introduced,—a tall fat boy of six years’ old, with a round, heavy face, and dressed for the occasion in richly embroidered clothes. We rose to receive him, but his father requested us to be seated, and made him kiss our hands.

Hearing us mention the name of Scanderbeg, he told

us he could show us a likeness of his reputed ancestor. Accordingly he ordered a book to be brought, which proved to be a life of that hero in Italian; and, after turning over a number of the pages, holding the volume upside down, he had the satisfaction of displaying to us the grim (though not genuine) portrait. Passing from the domain of history to that of philology, he proceeded to explain the derivation of the name Mirdite, according to the tradition of the country. This relates that, on the morning of the battle of Kossova, Sultan Amurath meeting the chief of their tribe, who had brought an auxiliary force to his assistance, was saluted by him with the words *mire dite* ("good day" in Albanian); and that in consequence of this, when the battle was over, and he undertook to guarantee the rights of his valiant allies, he gave them the name of Mirdites, in commemoration of the words of good omen which he had heard in the morning.⁶ Though this explanation is inadmissible, yet it has some plausibility in it; for it will be remembered that in the Russian war the English and French soldiers who fraternized, used commonly to know one another only by the names of "I say" and "Dis donc;" and readers of French history are aware that the regular name in French for the English at the time of Joan of Arc, was derived from an expression (not a very pious one) which was frequently in their mouths.⁷

In the course of the day it was proposed to us to make an expedition to the highest point of the mountain behind Orosch, which is called the Monte Santo. We were accompanied by Ali Bey with six attendants, three on horseback and three on foot, one of whom, an excessively

⁶ See also Hecquard, p. 233.

⁷ Michelet gives it as "Godden;" see also Sharon Turner's 'History of England in the Middle Ages,' ii. p. 567.

wild-looking fellow, though clad in the ordinary costume of the country, was a captain ; he is said to be a lion in battle, and one would not, I think, be far wrong in recognising in him the son of the ferocious Lech Sii. As soon as we were outside the palace, a *feu de joie* was fired, the guns being discharged at random, and the bullets flying in all directions about the valley. Our cavalcade mounted the hill-side diagonally by a steep path, until a depression in the mountain-chain was reached ; from this we proceeded upwards over grassy slopes to a spring by the side of a cavern, in which in former times was a chapel of St. George, though now it has been destroyed by a fall of rock. While we were resting at this place, a little diversion was caused by an accident happening to my saddle, which nearly resulted in the loss of that important part of a traveller's equipment. One of the Albanian attendants, wishing to make fast his horse, had attached his saddle to the stirrup-leathers of mine. The horse became fidgety, and at last by continual pulling dragged the saddle over the hind-quarters of my horse, a process which the bad girths of the country render comparatively easy ; and then, finding himself encumbered with this unusual appendage, took fright, and galloped off across country at full speed with the unhappy saddle trailing behind him. After he had gone about three-quarters of a mile, he pulled up, and one of the men was sent to secure him : meanwhile I had requested to be mounted on another horse, and we proceeded up the mountain. At last we reached a very steep part of the path, called the *Scala Santa*, where the rock was broken in steps (it was curious to hear the Italian words mutilated by the Albanians) ;⁸ and on

⁸ Thus in Count Karaczay's map, which was constructed from information orally obtained, the Monte Santo is called Monte Scintet, or Shintit.

reaching the top of this we found a rude stone church, dedicated to St. Benedict, with the ruins of an old Benedictine monastery, close to which rose a clump of finely grown elms, the only ones which I saw in the country. Of the history of the place we could learn nothing.

From this point we were taken to a spot about a quarter of a mile off, where was a deep hole, descending for some distance into the bowels of the earth, which was regarded with great wonder by the natives, from the booming sound it emitted when a large stone was cast down, and bounded from point to point of the narrow passage. A story of course was attached to it, and a very rigmarole one it was—how that a similar cavern existed in another part of the Mirdita, where the reverberations of any sound produced in this place were heard ; and that once a shepherd, who had been robbed of his flock, by casting a stone down this hole sent tidings of his misfortune to his brother, who was feeding his sheep near the mouth of the other. It is an example of the small amount of consistency that a half-savage people require in a legend. A shooting match was then proposed, and, as a mark, I pointed out the broken stump of a fir-tree about five feet high, peeled and white, some 300 yards off, on the other side of a gorge. My companion borrowed an European rifle from one of the party, and hit it in the middle, sending the splinters flying all about. Then came an Albanian with his long thin-stocked gun, and grazed the edge ; another followed, and missed ; last of all came the fortunate possessor of the rifle, and struck it full. Evidently the native weapon is not constructed for precision. At last we mounted to the grassy summit, which is 4890 feet above the sea, and a *salvo* was fired in honour of our arrival. On hearing this, the party we had left below returned the

salute, and as they aimed their pieces in the direction from which the sound had come, we heard their bullets whizz over our heads, or spatter against the rocks below us, in a manner not wholly agreeable. From this elevation almost the whole of the Mirdita is visible, together with a great part of the rest of Upper Albania. The wild Captain was here of the greatest service to us, for he proved to have a far more accurate knowledge of the geography and of the positions of the neighbouring tribes than any one else in the company. By means of his explanations, and by the aid of Kiepert's map of European Turkey, which gives, on the whole,⁹ a remarkably faithful delineation of this district, we were able to identify most points in the view. The country of the Mirdites forms nearly a square, as it extends about 35 miles in a direct line from north to south, between the territory of the Ducadjini and that of the Mat; and 40 miles from east to west, between the mountains of the Dibra and the plain of Zadrima. The elevated ridge on which we are standing forms a well-marked backbone of considerable breadth, running directly north and south, and rising in the latter direction first to the striking summit of Mount Cunora, and then to the lofty peak of Dyia. The mountains to the west, including those which we had traversed, though extremely irregular, take the same direction on

⁹ Hecquard's map in 'La Haute Albanie' gives the river-valleys of the north-west portion more accurately; in those of the north he is completely wrong. He is right in putting Orosch further from the Black Drin than the other maps, and consequently the chain of the Monte Santo should also be placed further west. Count Karaczay's map in the 'Journal of the Geographical Society,' vol. xxii., gives the valleys of the Fandis well, but he leaves far too little space between the main chain and the Drin, and places the whole country not sufficiently south relatively to Scodra. The mountain which I have called Dyia, is probably his Mount Spileon. Kiepert is quite wrong in the northern boundary line of the Mirdita, which ought to run much further north, and cross the Prisrend road at one point.

the whole as the main chain, but are intersected by the numerous river-valleys which radiate like a fan from a point in the neighbourhood of Alessio. The aspect of the country from this point readily explains the unwillingness which the Turks have always felt to attack it. To turn to the more distant objects—to the south-west appeared the mountains of Croia, the scene of Scanderbeg's most brilliant triumphs; a little north of west the Monte Veglia, beyond which the Adriatic was seen between Dulcigno and Antivari, about 80 miles off; the Lake of Scodra was concealed by the nearer mountains, but on the sea-side of it rose the Mount Rumia on the confines of Montenegro, and on the other the fine peaks of the Clementi; to the north-east were seen the serrated ridges which overlook the plain of Jacova, while the whole eastern horizon was bounded by the long line of the Schar-dagh or Scardus, even at this season still patched with snow, between which and us lay the deep valley of the Black Drin.

The mountain-side directly behind Orosch is a mass of granite, abutting against the precipices of the Monte Santo, which, like the rest of this central chain, and the greater part of the country eastwards as far as the Drin, is composed of limestone. The igneous rock of which so great a part of the Mirdita is composed has here disappeared. The vegetation is also changed, for the oaks are no longer seen, and from the level of Orosch to the summit there are numerous pines and firs. At this point, too, we take leave of the flora of the Adriatic, which, to some extent, we had found reaching up the interior valleys; many of these plants and shrubs we shall not see again until we reach the Ægean. After lingering long over this most instructive view, we at last began to descend to Orosch, where Bib Doda was expecting us to dinner. On

the way we recovered the truant saddle, and, thanks to its padding, and the grassy slopes over which it had been trailed, though covered with scratches, it was practically unhurt, except for a broken girth, which had been repaired in the interval. Great was the satisfaction of Ali Bey, who remarked to me with some naïveté, “È molto curioso il nostro Principe—and as he had specially entrusted you to my care, I might have got into an awkward scrape, if anything amiss had happened to you or your property.”

There was one object which we regretted being unable to see at Orosch, and that was the parish church, which contains an ancient cross of very rich workmanship, which is said to be Byzantine, and to date from the time of Scanderbeg. The ministrations of this church have been from time immemorial performed by an abbot, who was once a personage of considerable influence in the country; but the office is now shorn of most of its privileges. The present holder was banished some years ago for causing political disturbances, but, after a time, returned and gathered his party round him; in consequence of which, when he was again expelled, the Prince communicated with the Turkish Government, who put him in arrest at Constantinople, to which place he had fled for refuge. One result of this is that his church is placed under a sort of interdict, and no person is allowed to enter.

One other custom of this people remains yet to be noticed, viz., their habit of capturing their wives. The Mirdites never intermarry; but when any of them, from the highest to the lowest, wants a wife, he carries off a Mahometan woman from one of the neighbouring tribes, baptizes her, and marries her. The parents, we were told, do not usually feel much aggrieved, as it is pretty

well understood that a sum of money will be paid in return ; and though the Mirdites themselves are very fanatical in matters of religion, yet their neighbours are reputed to allow the sentiment of nationality to prevail over that of creed ; so much so that at Easter the Mahometan shepherds undertake to guard the flocks of the Christians, while at the Turkish Bairam the Christians do the same for the Mahometans. Prince Bib himself won his present spouse in this way. My reader will naturally enquire, as I did on hearing this strange statement, what becomes of the Mirdite women ? The answer is, that they are given in marriage to the neighbouring Christian tribes. If any one considers this incredible in so large a population, he is at liberty to adopt the more moderate statement of M. Hecquard, who only speaks of this custom as existing among the chiefs ;¹⁰ but I state the facts as they were stated to me, and since the ground of the custom was distinctly affirmed to be the feeling that marriage within the tribe is incestuous, and wherever in similar cases this belief has existed the custom of exogamy, as it is called, together with the capture of wives, has existed also, I feel very little doubt in my own mind that the stronger statement is the true one. As the Mirdites are the only people in Europe, as far as I can learn, among whom this practice exists (though it is maintained by many savage tribes), and as great light has been lately thrown on the subject by Mr. McLennan in his remarkable book on ‘Primitive Marriage,’ I propose to say a few words about its history and origin.

Amongst a large number of barbarous races the custom exists of killing female children. The cause of

¹⁰ Hecquard, p. 229.

this is that females, being less capable of supporting themselves and defending the rest, are far less valuable members of such a community than males. Further on in this narrative I shall have to mention a remarkable instance of the aversion felt to the birth of female children even amongst the Christian population of one of the most civilized parts of European Turkey ; but this feeling is naturally much more powerful where, from scarcity of food and the neighbourhood of enemies, the strength of a tribe depends on its freedom from encumbrances. Side by side with this is to be placed the fact, that a state of hostility is the normal condition of savage tribes, so that every one who is foreign to a group is regarded as an enemy, and every group is hostile to the neighbouring groups. The result of this state of things is as follows. When the number of women in a tribe has been so reduced as to have no adequate proportion to that of the men—and in some cases this is known to have gone so far that a horde has no young women of its own—it is necessary that they should procure themselves wives from somewhere else. Now if they were at peace with their neighbours, this might be brought about by contract or by purchase ; but as they are usually in a state of hostility, they are reduced to the same condition in which the tribe of Benjamin is described to have been in the Book of Judges, when cut off from intercourse with the rest of the tribes of Israel, and are forced to obtain their wives either by spoliation after conquest, or in some other way by stealth and violence. When this habit of procuring wives from without, originating first in the necessity of the case, has existed for some time, it passes into an actual law of exogamy, *i.e.*, the prohibition of marriage within the tribe, which in its turn renders the capturing of women more systematic and

universal. After a lapse of time again, when intermarriage within the tribe has long ceased to be practised, the idea grows up that such marriages are incestuous, because all the members of the tribe are descended from a common ancestor; and thus the custom of exogamy is subsequently explained and justified, receiving at the same time a religious sanction. The instances by which these statements may be supported are almost innumerable. Mr. Latham, in his 'Descriptive Ethnology,' goes so far as to say that the principle of exogamy is, or has been, almost universal. It is found both in North and South America, in Australia, in the islands of the Pacific, in Africa, in India and Affghanistan, amongst the Calmucks and the Circassians. In most of the cases which have been collected it is accompanied by the practice of capturing wives, and usually marriage with the tribe is prohibited as incest. That a shrinking from incestuous connection was not, however, the original cause of exogamy, is sufficiently clearly shown from the fact that, in a primitive state of society, the marriage of near relatives does not seem to have been considered improper, as we see, for instance, in some of the marriages within the family of Abraham. And still more amongst savages the ties of blood appear, at an early stage of their existence, to have had very little force.

So far we have been speaking of the state of tribes living in barbarism at the present time. But it must be remembered that this condition of existence is one through which almost every part of the human race has sooner or later passed, and consequently that there is a probability of exogamy having existed among them. That this was so is almost conclusively proved by the traces which are found in nearly all nations in a progressive state of civilization, of customs and ceremonies

connected with marriage which are explicable only on the supposition of the prevalence among them at some previous period of the system of capture. From these it would appear that, when the capture of wives as a reality began to die out, the form of capture was in each case retained ; that is to say, in order for a marriage to be considered complete, it was held to be necessary that, after the contract had been made, the bridegroom, or his friends, should feign to steal the bride or carry her off from her relations by force. The process of change by which this was brought about, and the way in which the original custom has been broken up and disintegrated into a variety of ceremonies, may be best learnt from the enumeration of a few instances.

Olaus Magnus, in the 16th century, describing the state of Muscovy and Lithuania at that period, says that the tribes of the north of Europe were continually at war with one another on account of stolen women, or with the object of stealing women. When a man had seen a young woman in a neighbouring village whom he wished to make his wife, he would call his friends together, make a descent on the village, and carry off the prize, after a fight with her kinsmen, if they were on the spot to come to her aid. According to his account, however, a change had been already introduced from the original state of things, for he goes on to say that the marriage was never consummated until the consent of the parents had been obtained. Still, in this case, the capture is a reality : let us now take an instance—one out of very many—in which the contract comes first and the fight after, and where the capture is consequently a form.

Lord Kames, writing at the beginning of this century, gives the following description of the marriage ceremony that, shortly before his time, had been customary among

the Welsh. On the wedding-day the parties of the bride and bridegroom met on horseback, and when the bridegroom demanded the bride her friends gave him a positive refusal, and carried her off, while the other party pursued them with loud shouts. At last, when both men and horses were tired out with charging and jostling, the bridegroom was suffered to overtake the bride and lead her away in triumph. Similarly at Berry, in France, at the present day, a regular siege of the bride's house takes place, and after the bridegroom's party have gained admittance a scuffle ensues in which heads are not unfrequently broken.

I must refer the reader to Mr. McLennan's book for other instances of the form of capture in its integrity, which he has collected with great learning from a variety of sources. Suffice it now to add one or two of the more disintegrated ceremonies in which it appears.

There are traces of its existence among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans. It is said by good authorities that the Old Testament expression, "taking a wife," is to be accepted literally, implying that the ceremony of carrying off formed part of the marriage rite. Of the Spartans Plutarch informs us that the bridegroom always carried off the bride with violence, though latterly it was considered sufficient for the lady to be seized and carried from one room to another. At Rome the form was in different degrees of disintegration among the patricians and the plebeians. While in the marriage of the latter the bride's house was invaded, and she herself torn with feigned violence from her mother's lap; in those of the former it was only required that she should be carried by the bridegroom over the threshold of his house, and her hair parted with a spear, "in memory," says Plutarch, "of the warlike manner in

which early marriages were brought about." The violence here offered was supposed to recall the rape of the Sabines, but there can be little doubt that that legend also embodied the original practice of capture. The idea that the resistance offered in these and similar cases proceeded from maidenly modesty is singularly improbable, being, in fact, the transference of the ideas of a later and more delicate age to the rude state of society where these customs took their rise: besides which it does not in any degree explain the combined plan of defence, shared in by a number of persons, which is found in some instances. Again, the old German expression *brûtloufti*, or "bride-racing," points to the existence among that people of a custom similar to that which exists among many wild tribes as part of the marriage ceremonial, of giving the bride a start either on foot or horseback, and making the bridegroom pursue her until he catches her. It has even been suggested that the English ceremony of "throwing the old shoe" may be a relic of some custom of the kind, as signifying a sham assault on the person who carries off the lady. This, of course, is a mere conjecture; but as the ceremony, though now absurd, must have had an origin, this explanation may deserve consideration in default of a better.

It cannot be considered a valid objection to the view here put forward, that no trace of the system of capture, or of the circumstances which accompanied it, is to be found in the sketch of the condition of the early Aryan tribes which Comparative Philology has constructed for us. Those peoples were, even at that early period, in a far more highly developed condition than that which produced this practice; nor will any one who has observed the permanence of customs and legends handed

down from primitive times, especially those relating to birth, marriage, and death, be surprised to find that the form of capture, as a marriage ceremony, may have been inherited by them from much ruder ages, when the Indo-European family had not separated from the common human stock, and may have been passed on by them to later generations. But it should be remembered also that the practice of exogamy may arise at any period, when the same circumstances present themselves which caused it in the first instance; and this, no doubt, was the case with several of the European races amongst whom it has been found, either as a reality or a symbol.¹¹

From this imperfect survey of Mr. McLennan's conclusions it will be seen that the case of the Mirdites, which seems to be unknown to him, is a peculiarly interesting one, because while the system of exogamy is perfect, it presents us with the reality of capture on the eve of merging in the form—since a sum of money is paid afterwards, and but little resistance apparently offered—but permanently checked in doing so by the fact that the women carried off are Mahometans, who cannot without violence be married to Christians. What causes led in this instance to the practice of marrying persons of another religion, when it is possible to obtain wives in a peaceful manner from other Christian tribes, and from what period it dates we have no means of knowing. In all probability this also was the perpetuation of some traditional idea that it was nobler to obtain a wife by force, and after a time it may have come to be regarded as an obligation that the object of the predatory excursion should be one of another creed.

¹¹ See on the subject generally McLennan's 'Primitive Marriage,' chaps. i.-vii., *passim*; also an Essay by the same writer in 'The Argosy' for June, 1866.

It would also lessen the difficulty arising from the number of women in this tribe who have to be provided with husbands elsewhere, if we could suppose that female infanticide prevails. There is, however, no authority for saying that such is the case, and in a Christian community, however wild, it is improbable, as there is no other crime which Christianity has more uncompromisingly or more successfully opposed.

CHAPTER XV.

OROSCH TO PRISREND.

Departure from Orosch — A Native Guide — The Bertiscus Mountains — Mirdite Shepherds' Encampment — Mode of Divination — Junction of Black and White Drin — A Nocturnal Visitor — Prisrend — The Kaimakam — Turkish Administration — The Castle — View from it — Churches — Visit of Dr. Barth — The Roman Catholic Archbishop — Population — Concealed Christians — Their Origin, History, and Present Condition.

EARLY the following morning we started from Orosch on our way to Prisrend. The Prince had risen to see us off, and we took our leave of him and our other friends at the palace with many expressions of gratitude on our part and regret on theirs. A guard of three men had been appointed to accompany us,—two of them on foot, and the other, one of the captains, who was the Prince's financier or accountant, on horseback. At first we followed the same path which we had taken on the previous day, but when we reached the depression in the ridge, from which we had mounted to the Monte Santo, we descended into a thoroughly Swiss-looking upland valley, with firs and beeches clothing its steep sides, from which the limestone cliffs cropped out at intervals. The meadows at the bottom were occupied by numerous herds of cattle, some of those, no doubt, belonging to Bib Doda, while in other places hay was being made. The pastoral look of everything, combined with the freshness of the air, which was as balmy as that of a May morning in England, made this part of our ride extremely pleasant. At last we reached a point where

the valley comes suddenly to an end, and a precipitous descent commences over loose rocks and *débris*, difficult for horses, by the side of steep and richly-coloured cliffs. When we reached the lower country we found a considerable undergrowth of hazels, but the oaks did not reappear until the following day when we began to descend to the Drin valley. There were few dwellings in this part and little cultivation, but both here and elsewhere in the Mirdita we observed that there was no appearance of want or misery among the population, nor any beggars, though we had several times met with these in Montenegro.

At midday we rested at the village of Sedjin, where notice had been sent on to the chief man to prepare for our reception. The clay floor of his best room was strewn with a luxurious bed of ferns, and a large piece of beef had been dressed and a lamb roasted. The liver was served as first course; but the most remarkable part of the entertainment was the bread, which was baked in circular flat cakes a couple of feet in diameter; these were made of maize, which, when rudely ground and kneaded, is very heavy and heating food. When we had partaken the rest of the company had their meal; but we observed that our host himself ate apart from his guests, and not until after they were served: this, we were told, is the custom of the country. During this time, one of the numerous storms which had been hanging about the mountains descended upon us, with thunder and lightning and torrents of rain; but after an hour it cleared up, and we were able to pursue our journey under the guidance of our host, who replaced our other guards, as they were to leave us at this point. This man, a wild Albanian, with shaven head and one

long lock hanging down behind, looked at first sight like one who might take your scalp at any moment ; but, despite his appearance, we found him not only a first-rate guide, but also a most agreeable companion—attentive, considerate, and polite. Our route lay along the mountain sides, through extensive forests of beech and fir, the general direction of our course, both on this and the following day, being towards the north-east. Before sunset we reached the only shelter that was to be found in the elevated region to which we had gradually ascended, a *mandra* or shepherd's encampment on the slopes of the mountains facing the north, from which there was a glorious view of the serrated, and in some places snowy, peaks of Jacova, which stretch along in that direction in a magnificent chain. These summits are described by Grisebach, who saw them from several points much nearer than this—on the road from Scodra to Prisrend—as presenting a superb spectacle, not easily surpassed in the Alps, from the *aiguilles* and pinnacles of limestone rock to which they rise. These, he says, form a striking contrast to the lower and less strongly marked shapes of the mountains of the Ducadjini, which, like those of the north and west of the Mirdita, are composed of greenstone, porphyry, and other igneous rocks. The long deep gorge of the Drin is caused by the meeting of these two different formations ; and the limestone masses which tower above its northern side he regards as the termination of that system of mountains which, under the name of Carnian, Julian, Dinaric, and Turkish Alps, runs south-eastward from the end of the main Alpine chain. Here it is broken off and thrown up into lofty jagged peaks, exactly in the same way as the dolomite peaks of the southern Tyrol have been formed,

and the mountain system terminated in that direction by volcanic upheaval.¹ This range, together with the other mountains which intervene between Montenegro and the plain of Ipek, and are separated by the latter from the Schar-dagh, form the Bertiscus of Strabo,² and by

¹ Grisebach, 'Reise durch Rumelien,' ii. 341, 342, 351, 352.

² In a passage which has caused great confusion—though rather, perhaps, from error in its interpretation, than actual mistake on the part of the author—he says: “Macedonia is bounded on the north by what may be conceived of as a straight line formed by Mounts Bertiscus, Scardus, Orbelus, Rhodope, and Hæmus; for these mountains, commencing from the Adriatic, reach in a straight line as far as the Euxine [Η Μακεδονία περιορίζεται—έκ βορρᾶ τῇ νοομένῃ εὐθείᾳ γραμμῇ τῇ διὰ Βερτίσκου ὄρους καὶ Σκάρδου καὶ Ὀρβήλου καὶ Ροδόπης καὶ Αἴμους τὰ γὰρ ὅρη ταῦτα, ἀρχόμενα ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδρίου, διήκει κατὰ εὐθείαν γραμμὴν ἔως τοῦ Εὐξείνου.”—Strabo, vii. fragm. 10]. It must always be remembered that this passage, though valuable as giving us the names of the mountain ranges that form this chain, is from the epitomizer of Strabo, and not directly from the author himself; it ought not, therefore, to be interpreted independently of a passage in the text of Strabo bearing on the same point, in which the statement about the “straight line” is given in a much more qualified manner:—“The mountains of Illyricum, Pœonia, and Thrace, are, in a certain way, parallel to the Ister, forming, as it were, a single line, which reaches from the Adriatic as far as the Pontus [Τρόπον γάρ τινα τῷ Ἰστρῷ παράλληλά ἔστι τά τε Ἰλλυρικὰ καὶ τὰ Παιονικὰ καὶ τὰ Θράκια ὅρη, μίαν πως γραμμὴν ἀποτελοῦντα, διήκουσαν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδρίου μέχρι πρὸς τὸν Πόντον.”—Strabo, vii. 5, § 1]. From these passages it was long supposed—and until lately the error was introduced into all modern maps of Turkey—that the country between the Danube and the Aegean was divided in the middle by a lofty range of mountains, which formed a continuation of the main chain of the Alps as far as the Euxine, and that the Scardus in particular formed part of this transverse range, and ran from west to east. Now, however, it is known that along one important portion of this supposed line, namely, to the south-east of Servia, the hills do not rise to any considerable elevation. To persons ignorant of the interior of the country the mistake was perfectly natural, for the “straight line” of Strabo is apt to mislead; and it does not at once approve itself to our minds that a chain running directly north and south should form part of a series of mountain ranges whose course is from west to east. Such, however, is in fact the case. The Bertiscus, with which the line commences towards the Adriatic, can be none other than the chain which lies before us in this view, reaching to the north of Ipek and the sources of the White Drin; but here the direction changes, and the next link is formed by the Schar-dagh, which, as its name would lead us to

that name, as they have no distinctive modern appellation, we will in future call them.

Our resting-place was a rude hut, whose roof and sides were constructed of boards roughly put together, through the interstices of which the smoke from the fire escaped. This was divided by a partition into two rooms, one of which served for a dairy and nursery, and for the women's apartments generally, while the other, a corner of which was given up to us, was appropriated to the men. Outside these was a kind of summer-house, roofed with branches and dead leaves, as a shelter from the sun; near this a number of calves were tethered; and all around extended a large enclosure, within which at nightfall the goats were driven, and milked and folded. While we were making our supper off the remains of the lamb which we had brought with us, the shepherds crowded round the wood fire which was lighted in the middle of the room to see us eating, which gave me the opportunity of observing that most of them had blue eyes. When we had finished they took up the transparent shoulder-blade and divined through it. This is done by observing the light and dark spots, which respectively denote good and bad fortune: a groove on the outer edge of one side is said to denote the death of the owner of the animal. I had often heard of this

suppose, is the ancient Scardus, and stretches first to the south-west as far as a point some way to the south of Prisrend, and then directly southwards to the plain of Monastir. This, again, is connected by the Nidjé and other mountains north of the lake of Ostrovo, and afterwards by those that form the Stena, or Iron Gate of the Vardar, with the Perim-dagh, or Orbelus, between Seres and Philippopolis, from which the irregular line of mountains which bore the name of Rhodope, leads in a north-easterly direction to the Balkan. See Grisebach, 'Reise,' vol. ii. pp. 110 foll., where the whole subject is learnedly discussed, and Colonel Leake's supposition, that the Scardus or Scordus of the ancients represents the mountains on both sides of the united Drin, is completely refuted.

custom, and by several writers on Albania it has been brought forward as a proof of the gross superstition of the people: in the country, however, I was assured by more than one person that it was merely a fancy or amusement, and such it appeared to be on this occasion. When I asked one of the fellows what he divined, he answered, "that the Christians were stronger than the Turks"—a tolerably safe piece of augury in the mountains of the Mirdita. Still there can be no doubt that formerly great faith was placed in omens derived from this source, and it is probable enough that, in some parts of the country, it is so now. In Dr. Grisebach's account of his visit to Afsi Pasha of Uskiub, a native hereditary governor, in 1839, he relates that he found him in great dejection because a fortnight before he had discovered a groove such as I have described, and believed it to signify his impending death. Shortly after, however, when intelligence arrived of the death of Sultan Mahmoud, he cheered up, because he argued that, while the sheep had belonged to himself, both he and his were the property of the Sultan, and thus the omen had been satisfactorily fulfilled! In this view he was confirmed by the fact that the time of the Sultan's death closely coincided with the day on which he had observed the augury.

The number of the inhabitants of this rustic dwelling amounted in all to thirty-five, but only twelve, including ourselves, occupied our apartment. The fire was kept up all through the night; and what with the keen mountain air, the smoke, the noise made both by sleepers and watchers, and other causes easily intelligible,³ to get to

³ We are apt to suppose that the natives of these countries are not much annoyed by these troublesome visitors; there is, however, a modern Greek proverb which seems to imply the contrary. It is intended to ridicule those

sleep was no easy matter. At one period of the night there was a sudden barking of dogs, and two of the party outside came in to fetch their guns, as if they were going to reconnoitre; after a quarter of an hour, however, they brought them back again. The following morning was damp and chilly, and we pursued our way in the midst of the clouds over the mountain tops, at a height of 5000 feet, or through the thick forests of beech and fir which clothe their sides. The path was rendered intricate by the tangled roots of trees and fallen trunks, but our guide showed extraordinary sagacity and knowledge of the country. At last, after following a north-easterly direction for several hours, during which all the surrounding country was concealed from our view, we began to descend to the valley of the Drin, at a point just below the junction of its two branches, where its waters are spanned by a lofty bridge. As we emerged from the clouds we saw before us, to the east, the upland valley of the White Drin which leads to Prisrend, while at some distance off to the south the Black Drin escapes from the mountains of the Dibra, as the district is called through which it flows from the Lake of Ochrida. The people of this district are the most famous carpenters in Turkey, and a large number of them make annual migrations in search of work. Notwithstanding that we obtained from this point an extensive view over mountains and valleys, what impressed us most was the apparent openness of everything as compared with who inflict on themselves a great evil in order to get rid of a small one, but, at the same time, it implies that the lesser of the two is a very real evil. It runs thus:—

“Διὰ τοῦτο ἔκαψα τὴν καλύβα μου,
διὰ νὰ μή με φᾶν οἱ ψύλλοι.”

“I burnt down my cottage; my reason was this,
That the fleas might not eat me alive.”

the narrow valleys of the Mirdita. As we descended, the oaks, which we had not seen since leaving the valley of the Fandi, began to reappear, and the ground was covered with low box shrubs. The heat of the low ground, too, soon made itself felt, in contrast to the cold which we had experienced in the morning. Close to the bridge is a khan, called the Kiupri Khan, or "Bridge Hotel," where we rested in the middle of the day: the height of this place is about 980 feet above the sea, which shows how considerable the rapids of the river must be in its descent through the gorge of which I have so often spoken. Here we took leave of our friendly Albanian, whom we with difficulty persuaded to receive a present of money.

Once more in Turkish territory, and on the main road between Scodra and Prisrend, we crossed the bridge, which is supported by two high arches of unequal size, with other smaller ones between them. It is extremely steep, like most of the bridges of the country, and as the stones with which they are paved are slippery, and the parapet hardly worthy of the name, and the horses are accustomed to mount them in zigzags, it is more pleasant to cross on foot, even for persons accustomed to precipitous places. This appears to be the custom among the natives, from the mounting stones which are placed at either end. For some distance the road follows the water upwards, until the meeting of the two rivers comes in view, when it cuts off the angle at which the White Drin flows in, and after reaching that stream, crosses its rapid torrent by a similar two-arched bridge. Here the valley becomes narrow, and the scenery Swiss-like and pretty, especially at a point where a tributary of some size—the Luma—flows in, and is surmounted by

an arch of single span. The occurrence of so many bridges within so short a space is very unusual in Turkey, but they are rendered necessary by the amount of traffic, for we met a surprising number of carriers with strings of mules and horses. In most cases these men, not being themselves the proprietors of the goods they were carrying, did not know what their bales contained; but we learned that the principal exports are wine, wool, and resin. From this place we continued to ascend the bank of the White Drin in the midst of fine alders, with fertile land in the foreground, and moorland in the distance, resembling parts of Devonshire, until, after three hours and a half from the Kiupri Khan we arrived at our resting-place, which was pointed out by the unanimous consent of the persons we met as the best on the way to Prisrend. Bad, indeed, was the best, for it was nothing but a spacious stable, with no accommodation for human beings except the floor—the earth, I mean—where they were allowed to lie *à discretion*. Outside this I noticed a curious granary, in which the heads of the maize was stored; it was circular, and about ten feet in diameter, formed of branches plaited in and out of upright poles, and thatched at the top with maize stalks. During the night, while I was asleep on the bed of hay that had been made for me in the middle of the stable, I became aware of some movement going on near me, and, on waking up, felt that my bed was being gradually pulled from under me. At first I was too sleepy to resist, but when I summoned sufficient energy to kick out, my leg encountered the head of a horse, who had broken loose, and having finished his own allowance of hay, had come to poach on mine. I believe I suffered most from the concussion, for he con-

tinued to feed on placidly until I called up Nicola with loud shouts, and he was at length reconducted to the manger.

The next day we continued to ascend the Drin until it makes a bend to the north in the direction of Ipek; here we left it, and crossed some low hills that descend from the mountains, near which is the village of Djuri, the first place surmounted by a minaret which we had seen since leaving Scodra. So completely had we been in Christian lands, and so different is the condition of the Mirdites from that of the other Christians of Turkey! From the foot of these hills the wide plain slopes gradually upwards towards Prisrend, backed by the mighty range of Scardus, which appeared close at hand in one long line, though its summits were shrouded by the clouds. At last the city itself became visible—first, the castle on a buttress of Scardus, with the houses of the Christian quarter creeping up its side; and afterwards the wide extent of buildings which cover the lower ground, from among which the spiry forms of twenty minarets rise conspicuous.

On entering we found it quite a city of waters. It is divided in two parts by the rapid stream of the Maritza, which, issuing from a deep gorge in the side of the Schar-dagh, pours down through the place with a steep descent; and the eye is refreshed by runlets of limpid water flowing in many of the streets. When first we reached the river after following the main street, which runs through the heart of the town, its stream was clear and bright, but a heavy storm of rain having fallen shortly after our arrival, in the afternoon it was swollen to a violent and turbid torrent. The bridge by which it is crossed in this part, from its arched roof and the booths at its sides, reminded us of the Ponte Vecchio at

Florence, though it is entirely of wood, and on a much smaller scale. The singularly picturesque bazaars, of which these booths form a part, have a gay appearance, from the bright-coloured handkerchiefs, waistcoats, and calicoes, which are hung about them ; and the effect of this is increased by the costume of their occupants, for the dresses at Prisrend surpass in magnificence all that I have seen elsewhere, even in Turkey. They are of two different sorts ; the one the richest form of the Albanian costume,—the white *fustanella* (kilt) and white shirt, with fez cap, gold-embroidered jacket, and broad belt, all of crimson ; while the other substitutes for the *fustanella* full purple trousers reaching to the knee, with leggings of the same colour below. To our eyes they appeared truly superb, after having been accustomed to the simple dress of the Mirdites. Our khan, too, which lay near the opposite bank of the river, though not superior to the better style of khans which are found in the large cities of Turkey, appeared to us a luxurious abode, as it was provided with private rooms, or dens, opening out from the wooden gallery which runs round the whole of the inside of the building, and lighted from it through a grating of strong iron bars ; furnished also with the usual rush mats, and arranged so that the door may be fastened with a padlock, which the experienced traveller carries about with him to ensure the safety of his property when he goes out. The scene which this place presented at all times of the day, but especially in the morning and evening, was one of truly Oriental somnolence. All about the gallery were people sitting cross-legged on carpets, either singly or in groups, smoking their pipes, and staring at the Frank strangers with large eyes of languid curiosity, while the plashing fountain at the further end of the court diffused a sense of repose

over the whole place. It was exactly one of those scenes which Lewis represents so imitatively in his pictures of Eastern life.

Shortly after our arrival we paid a visit to Nazif Pasha, the governor of the district, to whom we had a letter of introduction from Ismael Pasha of Scodra. Though he bore the title of Pasha, we found that in respect of his office he is only a Kaimakam, or governor of the second rank, and is under the Pasha of Monastir, to whom the authorities at Calcandele and Uskiub are also subject. His house was on a rising ground in the outskirts of the city, and we found him in the midst of bricks and mortar, for he was building himself a new and commodious Serai. He was a weak-looking young man, and wore a blue silk overcoat trimmed with swans-down ; but he appeared to be an observer of the good old customs, for he regaled us with chibouques of jasmine, instead of the inexpensive and almost universal cigarette. He spoke a few words of French, and professed to have known that language once, but excused himself for having forgotten it by long disuse since leaving Constantinople. Like most Turkish officials, he lamented the present state of things, and professed an ardent desire for improvement, propounding at the same time large schemes of his own, such as making the Drin navigable by a system of locks to counteract the rapids. When not even a carriage-road exists in the country, it may easily be understood how little such expressions mean. "A Turk in action," Mr. Palgrave has truly said, "has rarely either head or heart save for his own individual rapacity and sensuality ; the same Turk in theory is a Metternich in statesmanship, and a Wilberforce in benevolence. *Video mcliora proboque; Deteriora sequor;* should be the

device of their banner ; it is the sum total of their history.”⁴ What traveller in Turkey has not often had occasion to feel what these words so forcibly express ! One improvement, however, to which Nazif drew our attention,—namely, that the population under his jurisdiction were disarmed,—if fully carried out would be a real reform. This is the first requisite for an established order of things in Turkey, and a *sine quâ non* for securing the Christians from ill treatment ; for while they are forbidden and the Mahometans allowed to carry arms, the necessary consequence is that the weaker party are exposed to continual outrages. As to this district, the Roman Catholic Archbishop afterwards told us that it is only within the city that the system of disarming has been carried out, and that in the neighbourhood the insecurity is so great, as to cause large parts of the country not to be cultivated. As he said to us, when speaking of this very point—“The Turkish theory is good, but nothing can be worse than their administration.”

Under the guidance of one of the Pasha’s attendants, we next proceeded to visit the castle. Though it contains a few Turkish soldiers, yet, like most of these old castles, it is useless for purposes of defence, being commanded by a number of other heights from behind. In one part we noticed two Venetian guns, stamped with the lion of St. Mark, though whether they were brought here as trophies, or whether the Venetians ever occupied the place, we could not learn. Anyhow, considering the difficulty of transport from the coast, it must have cost no little trouble to bring them here. The view from this

⁴ Palgrave’s ‘Arabia,’ i. 299.

point is extensive, and extremely fine. The whole city lies extended below you, with the Maritza rushing through it in a winding course, bordered at the sides by willows and other trees, and spanned by half-a-dozen bridges, one of which is of stone. About the lower part, where the houses are larger and less closely built, the trees are thickly clustered; and beyond this the open country extends in a sea of green vegetation, which gives way after a time to uncultivated land, but reappears again in places, as the eye sweeps over the undulations of the vast plain that reaches as far as Ipek. The smoke of that place may be seen at the foot of the mountains to the north-west, more than forty miles off. The green appearance of everything, so striking a sight at this time of year, was accounted for partly by the height of this place above the sea,—1577 feet by the barometer,—and partly by the large rainfall there had been throughout Turkey during the previous spring. Above Ipek, and stretching for some distance along the far horizon, are the magnificent peaks of the Bertiscus: directly opposite to you towards the west, rising from the right bank of the White Drin, stands the grand conical form of Mount Bastrik; and to the south-west, on the opposite side of that river, just where the valley by which we had approached begins to close in, is Mount Koraphia (called Coridnik by Grisebach), part of a vast spur which is thrown out from Scardus at a point south of Prisrend, and bounds the plain in that direction. Again, as you look backwards the deep gorge is seen, through which the Maritza issues from the heart of Scardus, and rising from the middle of it an isolated rock, on which stands the castle built by the kings of Servia at the time when this district, which is now called Old Servia, formed part of their kingdom. At that period Prisrend was the

Servian capital. The Archbishop informed us that it is thought this castle is on the site of the old Roman town of Ulpiana ; but this view is probably erroneous, as that place seems to have been in the neighbourhood of the modern Pristina, which lies between thirty and forty miles to the north-east of Prisrend.⁵ It is not impossible that Theranda, which is mentioned as being on the ancient road running to Lissus (Alessio), from a point to the north of Scupi (Uskiub), may have been the same as Prisrend ; and the partial similarity of name lends some probability to the supposition. But here, as elsewhere, the absence of Roman remains to the west of the Scardus shows how slight a hold either the dominion or the civilization of Rome had on these parts, and how complete a barrier the mountains formed against external influences.

As we descended from the castle, we passed through the quarter of the Greek Christians, which is situated on the steep hill-side. So irregularly were the houses built in the upper part (for streets or lanes there were none) that even our Turkish attendant had some difficulty in finding a passage between them. In the midst of this district was a small and very ancient-looking church, built of brick, in the Byzantine style, which had attracted our notice from the castle. The original structure was a tiny place, oblong in form, with one cupola and no transepts ; to one side of this another building of later construction had been added on. This is called the Church of the Agoghi, and is the only Christian church in Prisrend, though permission has lately been given for the erection of another and larger one in the lower town, the walls of which are now half built ; but the work has

⁵ For the proof of this see Leake's 'Northern Greece,' iii. 477.

been stopped for want of funds. By looking through the keyhole we could see a lamp burning before the image of a saint sheathed in silver, but we were disappointed of seeing the interior, as the people said the key was kept a long way off, and showed evident disinclination to help us in the matter, probably in consequence of our being accompanied by a Mussulman. We then descended, and made our way to the opposite angle of the city in the plain, where there is another and still more interesting church, which has been converted into a mosque. It was formerly the cathedral. This building is also Byzantine, having one central cupola, and four others in various parts, and, what is very unusual in Byzantine churches, a western tower surmounting the outer porch, or *proaulion*, on the top of which again a minaret has now been built. The architecture of the interior is extremely plain ; the nave is composed of five bays, two of which are west and two east of the central cupola ; there are aisles at the sides, and between these and the nave are two other extremely curious narrow aisles, not more than six feet each in width, the object of which it is difficult to conceive ; but yet they appear to have formed part of the original structure. There are three apses at the ends of the nave and outer aisles ; and over the proaulion there are chambers under the tower. The whole effect of the building has, as usual, been spoilt by its re-arrangement as a mosque. The guardian of the place informed us that another Frank had visited it not more than a fortnight before ; and on further enquiry we discovered that this was none other than the distinguished African traveller Dr. Barth, who had left Scodra earlier than ourselves, and after passing through the confines of Montenegro, where he had nearly been killed in a dispute with a native, had reached this place, and started again with the

view of exploring further south in Albania. How sad to think that he should have escaped this danger only to be carried off by an epidemic on his return to Germany in the autumn! His loss will be greatly felt by those who take an interest in the interior of Turkey, for he had made more than one journey through parts little known, and would probably have continued his investigations in subsequent years. His name will frequently occur later on in this narrative, where our route will meet that which he took in 1862, and of which he has published an account distinguished for its almost photographic accuracy.

Our day was concluded with a visit to the Roman Catholic Archbishop. He is a Dalmatian by birth, and consequently, like most, if not all, the prelates in Upper Albania, an Austrian subject : it was outside the Austrian Consulate that we met him (for that Power is represented even in Prisrend), and from thence he conducted us to his house, which was hard by. This was an unpretending structure, with a large courtyard on one side of it, the greater part of which was used as a Christian burial-ground. The chapel, which is the only Roman Catholic place of worship, might be called a very apostolical upper chamber, if it were not at the bottom of the house, and in part underground. It is a simple room, with a very low roof, and has been added to at different times ; in consequence of this, the original chapel, which contains the altar, is in one corner of the present building. The Archbishop, who is a handsome man, and young-looking for his position, conversed with us for some time in Italian, with a vivacity and energy truly delightful from its contrast with Turkish languor ; while his companion, a Franciscan monk, served us with coffee and cigarettes. He informed us that notwithstanding the importance of Scodra and Prisrend, no regular postal communication

exists between them, and there are only occasional means of sending letters. Speaking of the general neglect that prevailed, and the absence of public works, such as roads and other facilities for communication, he remarked how little excuse there is for this, when the system of the *corvée* or forced labour exists, according to which the governors have the power of employing the people at their discretion on government works, without being required to make them any remuneration. The population he estimated at fifty thousand, a number the magnitude of which surprised me, both from the appearance of the city and the accounts given by other travellers ; but his estimate seemed to have been carefully made, and he divided them according to their creeds, into 8000 Mahometan families, 3000 Greek, and 150 Latin. The numerical increase cannot be very rapid, if it is true, as he assured us, that from the prevalence of infanticide and want of care in rearing the children, from one-half to two-thirds of them die. Those who belonged to the Greek Church he described as being Bulgarians, but said that there were many Latin words interspersed in their language, from which I should gather that there must be a Wallach element amongst them, and this is confirmed by their church being called the Church of the Agoghi, as that name is applied to the Wallachs in Albania. It will be seen from the numbers here given that the Archbishop's own flock in Prisrend is a small one ; and when I enquired whether there were any Roman Catholics on the other side of the Scardus range, he answered that there were extremely few—only, in fact, a few merchants in some of the larger towns. In former times this would seem not to have been the case, for originally the Archbishopric was at Uskiub, and it was afterwards transferred to this place. He spoke warmly of the persecutions and indignities to which the

Christians in these parts were exposed, and this applied to the Greeks as well as the Latins. Until a very few years ago, the Turks from a neighbouring slaughter-house used to fling all their offal into the burial-ground attached to the Archbishop's residence ; which insulting practice was not put a stop to until M. Hecquard visited the place as Consul, and obtained leave from the governor that a high wall might be built round the enclosure. Numbers of the Mahometans, he said, both here and in the neighbouring districts, are in reality Christians, only from fear of persecution they profess the dominant creed : they observe the fasts of the Church and the Sunday, but this is done in secret, while in public they appear as Mahometans, and worship in the mosques. In the country they are known by the name of Lavamani, and we had already heard them spoken of both in Montenegro and at Orosch.

The origin of these people is a remarkable one, and would form an interesting episode in a history of persecutions. Like the Jews in Spain, they are an instance of the way in which ill-treatment may produce outward conformity, and even to some extent acquiescence in a new creed, while at the same time the old belief has never been extinguished, but continues to reassert itself in a variety of ways. Thus it is, for instance, that the Mahometans of Scodra, and in other parts of Albania, observe the festival of St. Nicolas. In that case, indeed, nothing more of Christianity seems to remain than traditional customs, though in all probability there is enough of association underlying them to be easily rekindled and fanned into a flame. But those of whom I am now speaking have a great deal more than this, and some of them have gone so far as to throw off the mask, and avow their real belief in the face of persecution. This will

appear from the following notice, which I have borrowed from M. Hecquard's volume⁶ :—

“ The origin of the concealed Christians is believed to date from the time when Servia was occupied by the Turks, but their numbers were increased at a later period. When, after a series of victories, the Imperialists had gained possession of Belgrade, the Albanian Catholics, encouraged by the promises of General Piccolomini, who held out to them a prospect of independence, rose in insurrection and joined the Austrian side. These latter, having shortly after made peace with Turkey, forgot their allies, and made no stipulations in their favour. To escape the fearful destiny that awaited them, some families followed the Imperial troops; while the rest saw their country invaded by the Tartars, who burned the churches, massacred the priests that ministered in them, and put to death all who dared to avow that they professed the Christian religion. Flying from this horrible persecution, part of the Christian families took refuge in the mountains of Montenegro; but when, after a short time, they were compelled to descend to the towns to provide themselves with the necessities of life, in order to avoid ill-treatment they assumed Turkish names, and, without abandoning their religion, pretended, when out of the region of their mountains, to profess Mahometanism. Nevertheless, it was not the whole of the compromised Christians that had been able to fly; and so, to avoid seeing themselves plundered or massacred, or to escape being forced to embrace Mahometanism, a great number of families, possessing lands and goods in the territory of Prisrend, in the towns or villages of Ipek, Prisrend, Jacova, Janievo, Guilan, and Commanova, followed the example of the new inhabitants of Montenegro. When it could be done in secret, they used to frequent the churches and receive the sacraments; and some among them used to have recourse to the Catholic priests, to obtain publicly from them the last comforts of religion.

“ The Archbishops of Scopia (Uskiub), yielding to necessity, thought themselves justified in allowing their priests to administer the sacraments to the concealed Christians, and give them whatever spiritual aid they might need. This state of things lasted till the year 1703, when it was decided at a national council, convoked by the Archbishop of Antivari and attended by all the bishops of Albania, that those Christians who, while in heart they held fast to the faith of Christ, failed, nevertheless, to confess it openly, by following the practices of

⁶ Hecquard, ‘La Haute Albanie,’ pp. 481-488.

the Turks and assuming Mahometan names, should be expelled from communion in the sacraments.

" In confirmation of this decision, an encyclical letter of Benedict XIV., bearing date August 1st, 1754, forbade the Albanian archbishops, bishops, priests, and missionaries, to allow Catholics to take Turkish names, either with the view of obtaining immunity from taxes, or for any other reason. 'Let them persuade those,' the letter proceeded, 'who, after having renounced the profanities of Mahometanism, have returned to the faith of Christ, to depart from these regions, if they mistrust their constancy and power of endurance, and to establish themselves in countries which are not subject to the Turks; for they ought not to be allowed, after having been regenerated in the name of Christ, to keep their old Turkish names; and if they have the faith at heart, they ought not in any particular to fail in the outward profession of Catholicism.'

" From that time to the present these families, although deprived of all spiritual help, preserved, nevertheless, the memory of the festivals, observed the fasts, and handed down from one generation to another the prayers of the Church, which they never fail to recite daily; although, in order not to expose themselves to the persecutions of the Turks, they pretend to practise their religion, and marry their daughters or give them their own in marriage.

" The Christian priests, who are established as *curés* in the neighbouring villages, have on several occasions endeavoured to eradicate this abuse, and sought, as far as was compatible with their spiritual condition, to bring them to a public confession. The most remarkable among these was Father Antonio Marcovich. Being gifted with resolution and energy, he succeeded in persuading 120 families, who composed the parish of Guilan, in Montenegro, to make public renunciation of Mahometanism, promising to endure with them all the persecutions they would have to suffer from the Turks, and never, under any circumstances, to desert them.

" So bold a move could not fail to have disastrous consequences for these unhappy families. As soon as it was known, a cry of indignation rose on all sides, and, instead of tranquillising men's minds, the Ottoman authorities and Hafiz Pasha, the governor, did their best to inflame them.

" Torn from their homes, these families were brought to Scopia. There, after having been all the way exposed to the illtreatment of their conductors, they were thrown into dark cells, where they had to endure the torments of hunger. But Marcovich, the priest, full of charity and faithful to his promise, had followed them, and did everything in his power to alleviate their sufferings.

“ Some days after, the heads of the village were brought before the Council for examination. Without suffering themselves to be moved by the terrible threats of the Turks, all declared that they were, and would die, Christians. Exasperated by this constancy—which he called obstinacy—Hafiz Pasha gave orders that the unhappy beings should be put to the torture; but, being unable to overcome their firmness, he condemned them to be banished to Asia Minor and their goods confiscated. These were sold for the benefit of the public treasury, or rather, as some assert, for that of the Pasha’s private purse.

“ On this the destitution of these unhappy families, who had become the objects of fanatical rage, is indescribable. Old men, women, and children, made their way on foot towards their place of banishment, joyfully enduring fatigues beyond their strength, and supported by Marcovich, that worthy apostle of Christ, who led them to fix their eyes on a better future and an eternal recompense for all their sufferings.

“ When, however, these occurrences came to the knowledge of the embassies of France, Austria, and England, they communicated them to the Turkish Government, which allotted to these families a village in the neighbourhood of Brusa, and gave them some land and the means of cultivating it. Though apparently favoured by these concessions, the sufferers had much more to undergo. In spite of the injunctions of the Government, the Turkish authorities left them utterly in want, and on one pretext or another daily overwhelmed them with ill-treatment. An epidemic put the finishing stroke to their miseries, and more than half of them perished. Father Marcovich, who had been appointed their *curé* in their new place of abode, being unable to remain indifferent to these sufferings, again betook himself to Constantinople, where, thanks to the urgent representations of the French and English ambassadors, he succeeded in obtaining the restoration of these unfortunate persons to their country, at the expense of the Porte, and the restitution of their goods.

“ These orders were carried out: a steamer bore the confessors of the faith to Salonica, from which place, with a special *firman*, they were able to reach their homes. Of 120 families, amounting at the time of their departure to more than 1000 souls, there remained only 80 persons.

“ Their return was unfavourably regarded by the Turks of the country, who were bound, according to the terms of the *firman*, to restore them their property. The Christians were on the point of perishing of hunger when in 1849 an *attaché* of the English embassy

arrived at Scopia with a new *firman*, and by means of the energy he used obtained for them not only the restoration of their land, but also freedom of religious worship. From that time they were no longer molested.

“The example of the people of Guilan was not immediately followed; the fear of persecution as yet acted as a check on the numerous families who were in a similar position, and, whilst beseeching their bishop to bring their case under the notice of the Christian Governments, these unhappy persons still remained deprived of the means of grace.

“However, on one of the last episcopal visitations of Monseigneur Bogdanovich (the late Archbishop), they declared to him that they were tired of waiting; that as the *bathumayoun* recognised the principle of religious liberty, they should no longer be breaking the laws of the empire by practising their religion openly; and that in every case they were ready to endure anything rather than remain any longer in this vexatious situation, and run the risk of dying without the pale of the Church.

“Monseigneur Bogdanovich, influenced by a feeling of prudence, induced them to wait patiently till the time should come when the new laws would be brought into force, and the local government would have sufficient power to cause their sovereign’s order to be respected. Their archbishop, however, had considerable difficulty in persuading them, and was reduced to great perplexity when they said to him, ‘If that time does not arrive before we are dead, will you not have to reproach yourself with having lost our souls?’

“Is it not really time to put an end to this state of things? The concealed Christians are known; all the Turks are aware that they are Mahometans only in name. Would it not be better for the Ottoman Government to take the initiative and permit them to practise their religion openly, rather than expose itself to an immense scandal from innumerable persecutions, which will not fail to happen shortly; for the concealed Christians have made up their minds to declare themselves, come what may, and it would only require the zeal of a missionary to renew the scenes of 1847.”⁷

⁷ Professor Ross mentions that in Cyprus there are from 2000 to 3000 concealed Christians who profess Mahometanism, but have their children baptized. Among their neighbours they go by the nickname of “linen-cottons” (*λινοβάμυσκοι*), or, as we might say, “linsey-woolseys” (‘Inselreise,’ iv. p. 202). Compare Hudibras:—

“A lawless linseywoolsie brother,
Half of one order, half another.”

CHAPTER XVI.

PRISREND TO USKIUE.

The Scardus Pass — Its Flora — View from the Summit — Calcandele — The Khanji and the Mudir — Former Condition of the Country — Hereditary Pashas — The Tettovo — Mount Liubatrin — The Vardar — Uskiub — Its History — General Geography of the Country — District East of Scardus — District West of Scardus — The Kurschumli-khan — Ancient Clock-tower — Justinian's Aqueduct — Circassian Colony.

ON the 29th of July we left Prisrend for the pass which here crosses the Scardus range. By this route it takes eight hours to reach the foot of the mountains on the opposite side at Calcandele. We heard, also, of another route, two hours longer, and somewhat further to the north, by which Uskiub may be reached without passing that place, but this appears to be a difficult and unfrequented track, only suited to those who have special reasons for avoiding the highway. In fact, throughout the whole length of the Scardus chain,—from its northern extremity, Mount Liubatrin, which overlooks the famous plain of Cossova, and whose foot is skirted by the pass of Katschanik, to the gorge or Klissura of the Devol, which cuts through the mountain mass to its very base, thus enabling that river to flow through it from east to west, and forming the most marked point of demarcation between the Scardus and its southern continuation the Pindus,—there are only two passes of any importance, namely, that which we are now about to traverse, and that which we have already crossed to the east of Ochrida. This fact it is most important to keep in mind

in studying the history of the country on either side of these mountains, both in ancient and modern times, as it was only by these that an army could pass from one to the other.¹ At first the ascent is steep both through and above the houses of the upper part of the town, until the summit of the great buttresses is reached, which, closely massed together and intersected by few lateral valleys, form the supports of the central chain. Along the ridge of these we proceeded for some distance, gradually mounting over grassy slopes interspersed with hazel bushes, in a direction almost due south, overlooking on one side the vast plain of Prisrend and Ipek with its girdle of mountains, and on the other a broad upland valley, sloping away towards the stream of the Maritza, which appeared at some distance to the left. Beyond this rose the highest summits—finely formed peaks, and generally clothed to the top with grass. Along the sides of the valley a few villages were visible, and cultivation extended in patches for a considerable distance along our track, but ceased when we began to ascend the steeper parts of the mountain: these were clothed here and there with beech forests—the only trees which grow in these upper regions—reaching upwards as high as 5200 feet above the sea. A small stone-built khan was the only habitation above this altitude, and with the exception of the *khanji*, the only other human beings that we saw before reaching the summit were some Wallach shepherds—Black Wallachs, as they are called, probably from the colour of their tents, to distinguish them from those who dwell in the towns.² These

¹ See Grote's 'History of Greece,' iv. 2, 3.

² In a wider sense the name Black Wallach has been used from time immemorial as a distinctive appellation of the Wallachians of Dacia, or those living north of the Danube.

families are completely nomad, having no settled habitation, and remaining in these mountain pastures during the summer months, until the snows drive them down towards the plains. As it was we passed several patches of snow, and saw a considerable quantity on the slopes of the higher summits. The flowers were magnificent during the last thousand feet of the ascent ; indeed no alpine or sub-alpine flora that I have ever seen could at all compare with them, either for variety of species, or abundance of plants, or luxuriance of growth. Conspicuous among these were *Saxifraga rotundifolia*, *Dianthus deltoides*, *Viola tricolor*, *Cerastium latifolium*, *Campanula patula*, *Geum montanum*, *Potentilla aurea*, *Ranunculus Villarsii*, *Thymus serpyllum*, and, above all, the brilliant *Geum coccineum* and the deep-pink clusters of the *Erica spiculifolia*.

When we reached the *col*, which was 7460 feet³ above the sea, a fine view disclosed itself towards the east. In front was a long deep valley, narrow and closely hemmed in by the mountains, at the end of which, where it opens out into a plain, lies the town of Calcandele, with its castle rising above it on one of the lower buttresses. Beyond the plain three mountain chains appeared, the highest and most distant of which was the Kara-dagh or Black Mountain ; on the near side of this, though not visible from this point, the city of Uskiub is situated. Further south than these rises a lofty distant peak, perhaps the Musdatsch, one of the principal summits of the Babuna range. On our left, to the north of the nearer valley, a sharp yet grassy height stood up con-

³ Boué gives the height as 6380 French feet ('Recueil d'Itinéraires,' i. p. 313). My own measurements were taken by the aneroid, corrected by the thermometer.

spicuous ; but what most attracted the eye in the whole scene was the line of noble peaks which bounded this valley on the south—called Zaribaschina in Kiepert's map—the loftiest of which, standing like a keystone at the point where this offset meets the main chain of the Scardus, rises far above the others. Though the Liu-batrin and Kobelitza are generally considered higher, yet in Kiepert this is given as the highest elevation in the whole range, and certainly, when seen from the plain of Calcandele, it has that appearance, and bears far more snow than any other.

The descent of the pass is considerably more rapid than the ascent, and before the valley is reached the path, as it winds over the rocks and broken ground in rough zigzags, is extremely steep, and would be very difficult for any except mountain horses. At one point we caught a view of the peak of Kobelitza between the nearer summits ; and at 5300 feet the beeches reappeared, 100 feet higher than we had seen them on the other side, which may perhaps be accounted for by this side having a more southerly aspect. Along with the first of these there stood a solitary stunted fir, the only one we saw on our whole route, for, as Grisebach has observed,⁴ the class of coniferous trees is almost unrepresented on the Scardus. Shortly after reaching the valley we crossed to the other side, along the steep slopes of which the track is carried some distance above the river all the way to Calcandele. The scattered villages which appeared here and there are inhabited by Albanians, and so in part is the plain below : there, however, they are mixed with Bulgarians, and beyond

⁴ ‘Reise,’ ii. 259, 334. The same writer remarks that on Mount Nidjé the beeches cease at the height of 5544 feet—ii. 168.

that no regular Albanian population is found, but only a few scattered villages. Thus in this more northerly district, also, as we have already seen in the neighbourhood of Ochrida, the Scardus is, roughly speaking, the line of demarcation between the two races, though there the Bulgarians extend over it for a little distance to the west, as here the Albanians to the east. We met a number of the inhabitants of one of these villages returning from Calcandele, where it had been market-day. They were mounted on mules, and most of them, with the true imperturbability of Mahometans—though probably they had never seen a Frank before—hardly lifted their eyes to look at us; but one humorous-looking old fellow at the tail of the party turned round after we had passed, and shouted to us in his native Albanian, which was afterwards translated for our benefit—“What are you come to Albania for, you Franks? To see our country, eh? Ah! 'tis a barren country, not worth your visiting, O Franks—a good-for-nothing country!”

Seen from above, as you descend from the termination of the pass into its streets, Calcandele is an exquisite place—a mass of trees, principally willows and fruit trees, from amongst which only the house-roofs and minarets emerge, together with a picturesque clock-tower, the upper story of which is of wood. Within, all is decay, filth and misery, and a large part of the population have a most unprepossessing look: it was the only place in all Turkey where we ever had stones thrown at us in the streets, or were called by the opprobrious name of Giaour. It is a very small place as compared with Prisrend, though, like that city, it is rendered important by its position at the exit of the pass. The information which we received as to the num-

ber of inhabitants was quite untrustworthy ; but, according to Grisebach, it counts 1500 houses.⁵ The rapid stream which we had followed during the latter part of our day's journey, and which is a tributary of the Vardar, passes through the town. The khan is the foulest place of the kind I ever saw. In the middle of the narrow court is a large cesspool, and the two sleeping-dens are on the ground floor and close to the stables, the only window having iron gratings open to the court. When we had taken up our abode in this mansion we almost regretted that we had not instead applied to the governor to quarter us on some family ; a plan which many travellers in Turkey, especially Germans, adopt, but which we had always been reluctant to practise. As it was, we passed the night better than usual.

The governor of Calcandele is a mudir, or official of the third class, while Uskiub is under a kaimakam : both these, as well as the kaimakam of Prisrend, are subordinate to the Pasha of Monastir. We were forced to appeal to him in the morning, for the proprietor of our lordly residence, a Wallach, demanded double of the fair amount for our entertainment, and, when we offered him the usual sum, closed the gates of the khan to prevent our departure. On our telling him that the matter must be referred to the mudir, he assented with a readiness that surprised us ; accordingly my companion set off with him, taking our dragoman as interpreter, while I remained behind to guard the baggage. I was sitting on horseback just within the gates, in the same position in which I had been when they were slammed in our faces

⁵ Boué says, four or five thousand souls, of whom one-half are Christians — i. p. 307. The height of Calcandele is 1740 feet above the sea.

—for, to say the truth, the resting-places within the khan were not such as to make me wish to dismount—and was intent on writing my journal, wholly unaware of the presence of company, when, on my friend's return, I looked up, and found the gates open, and in front of me a double semicircle of crimson fez caps, covering the heads of two rows of boys and men, who were watching my proceedings with the greatest curiosity. As to our suit, it had been settled without much difficulty. The mudir required the *khanji* to enumerate the articles with which he had supplied us, together with their prices. When he had done this, and, notwithstanding a liberal estimate in his own favour, failed to make up more than half the sum he had demanded, he was ordered to receive what we had offered; after which the mudir announced his intention of putting the knave in prison. My friend, however, interceded for him, and obtained the remission of that part of the sentence, knowing what sort of a place the interior of a Turkish prison is said to be.

The difference between the existing state of this part of the country in respect of its government, and that which Grisebach describes when he passed through it in 1839, is strikingly great, and serves to explain much both of the former condition of many provinces of the Turkish empire, and of the changes that have lately taken place. In his time Uskiub and Calcandele, with all the adjacent districts for a considerable distance, formed a hereditary Pashalik in the hands of one great family, the head of which, Afsi Pasha, resided at the former place, while the dependency of Calcandele was governed by his brother Abdurraman Pasha. Their family had held this important position for about 200 years; and so well established was the power in their possession, that when Afsi's predecessor succeeded to

the office as a child of three years old, the administration was carried on during his minority by his relations, and he continued to rule from first to last during eighty years. The nature of their relation to the Sultan was one of practical independence, though they paid tribute and acknowledged themselves as his vassals. At any moment, if it suited their plans, either to promote their private interests or to counteract what seemed an offensive move on the part of the Porte, they were ready to rise in revolt ; and though in some similar cases the central Government succeeded in overthrowing the power of the local chiefs, and substituting a governor of their own, yet after the lapse of a few months they found it politic to reinstate them on account of the authority they exercised over the population, and the powerful opposition they were able and ready to offer. On the other hand, if treated with favour and confidence, they were usually ready, as we have seen in the case of the Mirdite Prince, to assist the Sultan in his wars, and were especially serviceable from the number of men whom their private influence could bring into the field. This state of things, however, which Grisebach compares to the relation of the Princes of the Empire to the Emperor in Germany, was feudal rather than Oriental ; in fact, it was wholly alien to the Ottoman system, in which, as in that of the ancient Persian empire, which was in almost every point its prototype, the central authority is in theory supreme and absolute, and the assertion of independence by a Satrap or Pasha an unpardonable crime. In consequence, it is not surprising that the Turks should have taken the first opportunity of abolishing the rule of these families, and substituting in their place their own immediate agents. Sultan Mahmoud, with his usual wily policy, endeavoured to effect this, in the case of Afsi Pasha, by

offering him high office in the State with a view to withdraw him from the scene of his hereditary influence; but that chieftain was wary enough to refuse the bait, and succeeded not only in excusing himself, but even in obtaining an enlargement of his Pashalik. Ultimately, however, the system of centralization prevailed, and along with it the Porte has obtained a firmer hold on its dominions, greater freedom of action, and increased facilities for carrying out reforms if it will. To travellers like ourselves the gain is considerable, as the authorities are always ready to facilitate one's progress as far as their power extends, while Grisebach seems to have had to rely in some measure on his skill as a physician for the favour of the native governors, and during his stay at Calcandele describes himself as in the position of a favoured member of the Pasha's household, who was expected to be at any moment at his beck and call. But to the people at large, in all probability, the change has been decidedly for the worse. Under the former governors, who seem on the whole to have exercised a beneficent rule, their wants were cared for, and there were persons on the spot to whom they could make complaints or apply for redress: besides this, under their influence the animosities produced by difference of nationality and creed seem to have been softened or forgotten. The effect of the present state of things is the very opposite of all this, since officers appointed at the most for a few years have no interest in the country or acquaintance with the inhabitants, and have every temptation to fill their own pockets by extortion and oppression. Centralization may be highly valuable, within certain limits, in a country whose vitality is strong, and where the administrative power is active and vigorous; but in an empire like Turkey, where

neither of these conditions is present, the necessary effect of it must be what we see everywhere—neglect, stagnation, and decay.

The Tettovo, as the district of Calcandele is called, is a long elevated plain lying under the eastern side of Scardus, and contrasted by its perfect level with the undulating tableland of Ipek. It is drained by the Vardar, which rises in the mountains at its southern end, and after flowing through it towards the north-east, on the opposite side to Calcandele, at last bends round in a great arc to the city of Uskiub, from which place it pursues its course in a south-easterly direction to the sea. The soil is extremely rich, and produces well, notwithstanding the bad cultivation; it has also a good fall of water from the foot of Scardus to the river, and is intersected by numerous streams which descend from that range, so that it possesses every requisite for drainage and irrigation, and with proper care would be magnificently fertile. It was now harvest-time, and we could at once discover that we were in the midst of a Bulgarian population, from the industry with which they were working in the fields, especially as the men were the principal labourers, an unusual sight to persons coming from Albania, where such tasks are left almost entirely to the women. Where the land was not cultivated, large herds of cows and buffaloes were grazing; some of these, which we counted, comprised from 150 to 200 head of cattle. The property mostly belongs to a native Bey, probably a member of the old ruling family; some of these Beys, it is said, got the lands into their own possession by the natives of the villages putting themselves on various occasions under their protection for the sake of security, on which they stipulated that they should hand over both their property and themselves unre-

servedly to them. It took up an hour and a half to cross the plain to the Vardar, whose waters we had not seen since we passed its red and turbid current to the west of Salonica on our former journey; we found it already a muddy stream, and near the bridge by which we crossed it, it was about 130 feet in breadth. From this point the Scardus presents a magnificent aspect, stretching in a long massive unbroken line until it is abruptly terminated by the grand pyramid of the Liubatrin, which slopes at once from its summit to the level country towards the north-east; its form, as it would seem, suggesting its name, which signifies in Slavonic *Lovely Thorn*. Almost behind Calcandele Mount Kobelitza was visible, another striking summit; but it is especially noticeable in this chain, and must be taken into account in estimating the height both of the passes and of the summits themselves, that the elevation of the peaks is not great in proportion to that of the range from which they spring.

After crossing the river, our route lay eastwards along stony valleys, which cut successively through the two low mountain chains which we had seen from the Scardus pass lying on the hither side of the Karadagh: we thus cut off the chord of the arc that the Vardar is forced to describe in order to avoid these mountains, which are offsets from the great Babuna range which forms the eastern boundary of the districts of Monastir and Perlepe. In the second of these valleys lies a watershed, where the Vlainitzia rises, which joins the Vardar a little distance above Uskiub: this we followed by a gradual descent throughout the greater part of its course. Near the point of junction stands a mosque, in the burial-ground of which are pieces of white marble columns, no doubt remains of antiquity, for hard by is seen a ruined wall,

part of a building of mixed stone and brickwork, which probably belonged to some Roman baths, or similar structure. On the opposite side of the way some gypsies were encamped in black tents. We then crossed two rivers successively ; first the Vardar, over which a wooden bridge is thrown ; and then the Lepenatz, which we forded—a considerable tributary, flowing from the northern foot of Liubatrin, and the plain of Cossova. The towers of Uskiub had for some time been visible as we rode along the plain ; but as we approached nearer, they were hidden by the slopes of a long spur of low undulating ground which is thrown out by the Karadagh, and at its extremity, where it descends steeply to the river, bears the castle, which overlooks the fever-breeding swamps that extend below. We crossed the level ridge at a point behind the castle hill, and shortly afterwards entered the upper part of the city.

The original name of this place was Scupi, but, in accordance with the practice so common among the Greeks of adapting an old name to a new meaning, it was altered by the Byzantines to Scopia, or “the look-out place,” which is the name still in use among the Christians ; this was corrupted by the Turks to Uskiub. Its later name was happily given, as it explains the secret of the importance attached to it in all times. It was the watch-tower that commanded the passes of the Scardus, through which the barbarian tribes descended to the more level and fertile lands of Macedonia, while at the same time it dominated the great artery of communication with the country nearer the sea. In Roman times it formed a central station on the great road which led from Thessalonica to the Danube. Under its walls Samuel, the Bulgarian monarch, was defeated with great loss by the emperor Basil. At a later period it was

taken from Michael Palæologus by the king of the Servians, who made it for a time his place of residence. Finally, the city was captured by the Turks; and Sultan Bajazet, seeing the importance of the position, brought thither a number of Turkish families both from Europe and Asia, and planted them there as a colony. "This he did," says Chalcocondylas, "that he might have a starting-point from which to ravage Illyria."⁶ From the Turks the place received the name of "The Bride of Rumeli."

As we have now passed out of the mountain system connected with the Scardus and the highlands of Albania, and from this point almost until we reach Salonica shall be descending the valley of the Vardar, it may be well here to take a retrospective glance over the part of Turkey we have traversed in this and our former journey, in order to get a clearer idea of its somewhat intricate geography. The course which we have followed in our route from the Adriatic has lain throughout at some little distance south of the great watershed of European Turkey, which is formed by the northern heights of the mountains of Montenegro and the Bertiscus, by the plain of Cossova, and after that by a succession of low hills, following a direction generally north-eastwards until they reach the Balkan. To the northward of these all the rivers flow towards the Danube; to the southward they find their way on the one hand into the Adriatic, on the other into the Ægean. Nearly at right angles to this line runs the great central chain of Scardus, the backbone of the western and more mountainous half of the country, rising at its northernmost extremity to almost its greatest elevation in Mount Liubatrin, and stretching

⁶ 'De rebus Turcicis,' p. 31.

first to the south-west, and afterwards directly south, until it is terminated by the Clissura of the Devol some distance beyond Ochrida. Here commences its continuation, the Pindus, which runs in a lofty and well-defined range between Albania on the one side, and western Macedonia and Thessaly on the other, until it reaches the lofty peak of Veluki (*Tymphrestus*), near the head waters of the Spercheius, at the south-west angle of Thessaly, which forms a central point of divergence for the mountains of Greece—for Othrys and *CEta* to the east, for the mountains of *AEtolia* to the west, and for those which may be regarded as the most lineal descendants of the main chain, the successive heights of Parnassus, Helicon, and Citharon. The ground on the two sides of this great barrier is wholly different in its formation. That to the west is made up of a number of irregular, deep, and for the most part narrow river-valleys, divided from one another by rugged mountains: that to the east of a succession of valley-plains, generally elevated themselves, though deeply sunk amid the rocky walls that surround them. To take the eastern side first: the characteristics of these valley-plains are the well-defined basins in which they lie, their rich alluvial soil, and the river which waters each of them respectively, and in each case makes its exit through a narrow passage, which is its only means of escape. Some valleys there are, indeed, such as those which contain the lakes of Ostrovo and Presba, which have no outlet for their waters; but in the four great valley-plains which succeed one another from north to south, divided by lateral spurs which run off at intervals from the central chain, all these characteristics are found. The northernmost and smallest of these is the Tettovo, the features of which we have already noticed, except the defile through which the

Vardar passes between the mountains on its eastern side and the hills that descend from the foot of the Liubatrin. At the southern extremity of this a branch detaches itself from the Scardus, which, bending southwards, becomes the important chain of the Babuna, and forms the eastern boundary of the second great valley-plain, that of Monastir, after which it is continued southward in other systems, such as that which runs behind Vodena, and lastly in Mount Bermius, on the western side of the plain of Salonica, the furthest offshoots of which approach the landward declivities of Mount Olympus. This second plain is enclosed on the west by another branch, which leaves the Scardus not far above Ochrida, and runs parallel to its parent chain, leaving room for the valley and lake of Presba between them : its highest summit is Mount Peristeri, behind Monastir, not far south of which place an offshoot from it bends round in a semicircle, bounding the southern side of the plain, and at last throws up the lofty mass of Nidjé, which overlooks Ostrovo. Between this mountain and the termination of the Babuna, the river of the plain, the Czerna, forces its way to join the Vardar. South of this again, and close to the side of Pindus, is another extensive plain, not touched by our route, from which the Vistrizza (Haliacmon) draws its waters, and ultimately breaks through the Bermian range behind Verria (Berrhœa), and flows into the Thermaic gulf. The fourth and largest valley-plain, that of Thessaly, is divided from this by the Cambunian chain, which connects Pindus with Olympus, and, being similarly hemmed in by mountains, emits its waters into the Ægean through the Vale of Tempe. All these four districts may vie in fertility with any other part of Turkey.

Turning from this to the western side, we find the

greatest possible contrast. Extensive level plains are here entirely wanting, for even that of Prisrend and Ipek is hardly more than an undulating plateau ; and instead of well-defined systems of mountains, we see such confused masses and irregular lines of divergence, that the plan of the country is better traceable in the rivers. Between Montenegro and the Bertiscus we have noticed how the land is drained by the Moratza flowing into the lake of Scodra, whose waters are carried into the sea by the Boyana. Further inland, the White Drin, rising near Ipek, and flowing southward through the plain between Scardus and Bertiscus—and the Black Drin, which carries off the waters of the lake of Ochrida, and in its northward course separates Scardus from the mountains of the Mirdites—combine their waters, and run westward through the deep gorge so often mentioned to the Adriatic, near Alessio. South of this the masses of the Mirdite mountains and the contiguous groups of Tyrana and Croia fill up the whole country as far as Elbassan, where the Skumbi intersects it from near the lake of Ochrida to the sea. Nearly parallel to this, though with a longer course, rising on the further side of Scardus, is the Devol, with which in the plain westward of Berat the Usumi joins its stream, thus forming the Beratino. Between the upper waters of these two rivers stands the solitary mass of Mount Tomohr, which hardly shows any sign of connection with Pindus, or any of the neighbouring ranges. In this part of central Albania some small inland plains occur, such as those of Elbassan and Berat, but those that run in from the sea form the richest land in all Albania, especially that of Avlona, which at an early period attracted the notice of Greek settlers. The hills which approach the coast at intervals in this part are low, but immediately to the south rise suddenly

to a great height, and form the stupendous precipices of the Acroceraunia. From this point the conformation of the country becomes extremely intricate, and the most important starting-place from which to examine its plan is the Zygos pass over Pindus, above Metzovo, where the head-waters of the Peneius run down into the innermost angle of the Thessalian plain. From this point the rivers of Albania radiate in different directions to the north-west, the Viosa towards Tepelen and Avlona, to the south the Arta flowing into the Ambracian Gulf, and the Aspropotamo (Achelous), which waters Acarnania. Westward, in the heart of the mountains, lies the lake of Yanina, whose waters have no visible outlet; and from the groups of mountains in its neighbourhood, the Kalamas descends to the sea opposite Corfu.⁷

The city of Uskiub lies in the slope of a low valley reaching to the river, having on one side of it the castle hill, on the other a lower hill covered with gravestones, of which also a vast number extend round the upper part of the place, testifying to the large population it must once have contained. The present inhabitants are said to amount to about 21,000, of whom 13,000 are Mahometans, 7000 Christians of the Greek Church, and 800 Jews;⁸ but there is a look of decay about the city, and its glories are of the past. As compared with the other cities of this part of Turkey, it has a great look of antiquity, which is especially apparent in the baths and minarets. The khan in which we lodged was a fine specimen of these old buildings—a brickwork structure,

⁷ See on this subject Grisebach, chap. xv., *passim*; and on the distribution of the tribes of this district in ancient times, see chap. xxv. of Grote's 'History of Greece.'

⁸ Hahn, 'Reise,' p. 64.

built round a spacious quadrangle, with two rows of stone arches and pillars, one above another, supporting its corridors and galleries. It is entered by a gateway secured with strong iron-bound doors; in the centre stands a large stone basin, which once contained a fountain, and at the back of the building are excellent stables. The whole place is massive, and very picturesque. In former days, when there was an extensive trade between Ragusa and Uskiub, it was a great resort for Ragusan merchants, and in one place a Slavonic name, which is thought to have belonged to one of them, is inscribed in large red letters on the wall. From the arched gallery of the upper story, which is reached by two stone staircases, doors open out into square apartments, which were occupied by these merchants; most of them are now left to decay, but a few we found in repair, and still tenanted. On the outside are seen the grated windows of the upper story, together with the dome-shaped attic roofs, covered with lead, from which it gets its name of Kurschumli-khan, or Lead Hotel. The bridge by which the Vardar is crossed was originally composed of nine arches, seven of which still remain, and the piers of two others, over which woodwork is now thrown; the stones of which it is built are very large, and the piers very strong to resist the force of the rushing stream. The appearance of the workmanship, and the level roadway which passes over it, so different from the steep ascent of ordinary Turkish bridges, leaves little doubt that it dates from Roman times. In the castle walls there is also work which is evidently Roman.

In the upper part of the city there is a lofty clock-tower, the lower part of which is of stone,—the upper, in which the clock is contained, of wood; it is mentioned

by the English traveller Brown,⁹ who passed by here in the seventeenth century, and before his time by the Mahometan writer Hadji Khalfa, in his description of Uskiub.¹⁰ The last-named writer speaks of the clock as dating from the time of the “unbelievers,” and as being famed for its size and sound, so that its striking was heard at the distance of three hours’ journey from the city. As it had not been investigated since that time, we were anxious to know whether it still remained, and accordingly laid siege to the tower, using a big stone in default of a knocker, for the door was fastened, and we could hear the keeper moving about in the upper story. At first he pretended not to hear us, and when at last he descended, a long palaver ensued before we were admitted; for, as he told our dragoman privately, he could not understand why we should want to examine the country, unless it was with the view of coming to conquer it afterwards. When the door at last was opened, we ascended the steep wooden staircase, which had been rendered neither cleaner nor safer by the multitude of pigeons that tenanted the tower, until we reached the clock; from this to the bell, and to an opening above it, the stairs were very rotten and rickety, but we were rewarded for our trouble by a superb bird’s-eye view over the country, including the city itself, the river and its plains, the Karadagh, about ten miles off to the north, and the distant range of Scardus to the west. The bell, which we examined, had no marks to explain its origin or date, and the old clock has unhappily been broken and removed (so the keeper told us), and has been replaced by a new one.

⁹ ‘Travels,’ p. 33.

¹⁰ ‘Rumeli and Bosna,’ p. 95, quoted by Hahn, ‘Reise,’ p. 63.

Early on the morning after our arrival we visited an aqueduct, which lies a mile and a half beyond the northernmost extremity of the city, and is still used for its original purpose, to bring water into the city from the lower slopes of the Karadagh. This structure is specially interesting, because in all probability it was erected by the Emperor Justinian, when he adorned the city with buildings, in commemoration of his having been born in the immediate neighbourhood.¹¹ It crosses a depression in the ground over which the watercourse had to be carried, and is composed—not, as Brown says, of 200 arches, nor, as Hahn computes it, of 120, but of 53 round arches supported by strong piers, over which, in the intervals of the main arches, the masonry is pierced by small arches mostly pointed, though some here and there are round. In the lowest part of the depression its height is about forty feet, and at one point in its course it makes an angle; the material is mixed brick and stone, rather roughly put together, except that of the arches, which are entirely of brick; the whole structure supports the watercourse, which is composed of stones and rubble, and covered in at the top. The architecture throughout is Byzantine.

As we returned, we noticed at the door of a public building in the suburbs two armed men, who wore a peculiar head-dress of a rough brown material, in appearance something between our guards' bearskin and the chimney-pots of the dervishes, and ornamented with a knob at the crown. On enquiry we found they belonged to a Circassian colony which had lately been established in this place by the Turkish government. In doing so

¹¹ See Appendix E, on The Birthplace of Justinian.

they have followed the example of their forefathers, for, as I have already mentioned, when the Turks first conquered the city, they placed an Asiatic colony there. By some persons the planting of these colonies of Circassians, the most fanatical of Mahometans, in the inland districts is regarded with great suspicion, as being intended as a demonstration against the Christian population.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VARDAR VALLEY.

Justinian's Birthplace — Kiuprili — Unexplored Route to Salonica — The Site of Stobi — Negotin — Banja — Demirkapu or Iron Gate of the Vardar — Boats Shooting the Rapids — Traffic to Perlepe — Lower Course of the River — Ardjen Lake — Avret Hissar — Arrival at Salonica — Railway Route across Turkey — Lines to India — Migrations of Labourers — Commercial Treaty with England — The Eastern Question — Greek and Slavonic Races — Future Prospects of Turkey.

ON leaving Uskiub we rode for four hours over a long plain which skirts the Vardar, with fine views of the majestic Liubatrin behind us, while at one point a lofty distant peak was seen through the nearer mountains to the west, perhaps one of those on the hither side of the Perim-dagh or Orbelus. A great quantity of corn is grown in the plain ; and where the land was left uncultivated, large herds of cows, horses, and buffaloes, were feeding on the rank grass. These last-named animals are also used here for drawing cars ; and when left at liberty may often be seen immersed in muddy pools, to which they betake themselves as a refuge from the flies ; occasionally I have seen their whole bodies encrusted with a coating of grey slime, bearing evident traces of their mud bath. In one part of our route we passed a large building, which serves as a factory or storehouse for saltpetre, which is collected in the neighbourhood and carried to Constantinople to be used in the manufacture of gunpowder. At the southern end of the plain the river makes a sudden bend and enters a narrow defile, in which the rapids must be very considerable, to judge by

the difference of elevation between the level of Uskiub and that of Kiuprili in the plain below it;¹ just at its commencement are the villages of Taor and Bader, which are believed to correspond to the Tauresium and Bederiana of ancient times.² The former of these villages, as having been Justinian's birthplace, was visited by Von Hahn in the winter of 1858. He found it to be situated on a small spur projecting towards the plain from the rocks which form the defile, and overhanging the river; above it rises a small plateau, well suited to be the position of the Tetrapyrgion, or square castle, which Procopius describes as having been built by Justinian; and here, the peasants told him, in ploughing they meet with traces of old masonry, and in one part there are remains of a watercourse of brickwork covered in with tiles.

Above the defile the river is joined by a tributary flowing from the east, the Egri-su, which even at this time of year had a considerable stream; but throughout this plain and the Tettovo we had observed, what we before noticed on the other side of Scardus, the remarkable freshness of all the vegetation, the explanation of which was to be found as well in the amount of rain that had fallen during the spring, as in the upland character of these districts. Close to this stream we stopped during the heat of the day at the Kaplan Khan; and on resuming our journey left the river and made our way by a pass in the mountains through the spur which forms one side of the defile; from this we descended into a lower and smaller plain, at the further end of which lies the town of Kiuprili, or, as the Christians call it, Velesa. The scenery of this part was extremely wild and barren; a small quantity of corn was grown on the nearer slopes,

¹ Uskiub is by the barometer 855 feet, Kiuprili 565 feet above the sea.

² See Appendix E., on The Birthplace of Justinian.

but all the mountains beyond were wholly uncultivated. Just before entering the place a single plane-tree greeted our eyes, the first we had seen throughout the whole of this journey, giving signs of the approach of more luxuriant growths and more varied foliage than those to which we had lately been accustomed. Mulberry trees also are grown here in considerable numbers for the sake of the silkworms which are reared by the inhabitants, and their produce sold to merchants, principally Italians, who come hither to fetch it for exportation.

The appearance of Kiuprili surprised us. We had expected to find it an insignificant place, for it is never named among the more important cities of Turkey; but instead of this, it presents a very imposing aspect from its numerous well-built houses, and has an excellent khan, which, from the blue and yellow with which its front is decorated, is known as "the Painted Khan." We were told that it is the first town, as you emerge from the central part of European Turkey, where the Christians have comparative liberty, and enjoy something like prosperity. During our stay we often heard Greek spoken in the streets; and though the population is estimated at 25,000,³ only six or seven minarets were to be seen. It would almost seem as if the former greatness of Uskiub had migrated here. Its position on sloping hills on both sides of the Vardar, at the entrance of a narrow defile, is extremely striking; in places the steep cliffs rise close above it, and at one point there is a nook far up on the hill-side to the west, in which stands a newly-built church in a pretty position, though from being closed in by bare rock it must have the temperature of a furnace. The two parts of the town are united by a long wooden

³ i.e., 5000 houses, as given by Grisebach, ii. 223.

bridge supported on stone piers, from which its Turkish name is derived. The Christian name of Velesa is probably a corruption of Bylazora, the name of the old Greek town which occupied the same site ; it is one of those important positions which are naturally occupied and defended from an early time, as it commands the entrance of the defile, the key of the lower country, from the north, the side from which barbarian invaders would be most likely to come.

From Kiuprili our journey became one of exploration, for information was wholly wanting about the lower part of the Vardar valley, as no traveller seemed hitherto to have taken this route. Strange though it may appear, since this is the direct way, and presents no difficulties to the traveller, yet the post road or track from this place to Salonica, which was followed by Grisebach and Hahn, makes a long détour westwards into the mountains to Monastir, and from thence descends by Vodena to the sea ; the line of telegraph wires from Belgrade follows the same direction. As might be expected, we had not proceeded far from the beaten path before we found our maps—even Kiepert's, usually so accurate—quite at fault ; so that, though we had no great expectation of finding many objects of interest, and could look forward to increasing heat as we got further south and descended into the plains, we had at least the satisfaction of breaking new ground. Over this region I hope to carry my readers somewhat rapidly, but I would advise those who do not care for topographical details to avoid it altogether.

The market of Kiuprili, which is held in an open space close to the bridge, presented a busy scene as we passed through it early in the morning on the 1st of August, in order to cross to the right bank of the river. Arrived

there, we turned southwards through the defile, and after passing the last houses of the city, noticed some old Byzantine churches, now in ruins, which stand on a projecting spur beneath the lofty rocks overlooking fine reaches of the river. Following its stream for some distance, we reached the point where a good-sized tributary, the Babuna, flows in, descending from the mountains of the same name ; through the deep valley in which it runs lies the regular route to Monastir. This we crossed, and leaving the Vardar, which here makes a bend, pursued our course over country undulating in dull, desert-like, stony plateaux. The only human being we saw in this part was a shepherd-boy, playing shrilly on a curved pipe, and followed by his flock feeding on the scant dry herbs. At length we again descended towards the river and more cultivated regions, where the barley had only just been cut, and still lay out in sheaves. The maize grew to an immense height, so high that our baggage-horse, unable to resist the temptation, became almost invisible in the green thicket. The river's course to our left could be traced by a partial line of poplars and willows, and between our track and it we passed scattered villages, miserable hovels of unbaked brick. Throughout our ride we passed excellent springs ; but requiring shade for our mid-day halt, we struck off a little way from our path, and stopped at the small village of Gratschan. Both the houses here and the neighbouring land belong to a Turk, at whose steward's house we stopped in the middle of the day : the fields are cultivated by Bulgarian peasants, who have half the produce, according to the *metayer* system, which is common in Turkey. They were a heavy-looking set of people, like most of their race ; but whether from natural dulness or from oppression, or both, it would be hard to say. The upper room, where we rested, was

open on two sides to the air ; and in it were two specimens of the *guzla*—one of the same kind as we had seen in Montenegro, the other much smaller, and shaped like a guitar, with several jingling wire strings : this is the most common form of the instrument among the Bulgarians. At the foot of the wooden staircase which led up to this chamber outside the building, was a slice of the capital of a marble column, which, the proprietor told us, was brought from the neighbouring village of Czerna Gratzko. This place is situated about two miles off, on a hill rising above the river Czerna, the ancient Erigon, which carries off the waters of the plain of Monastir, and is the largest tributary of the Vardar : here it is a wide stream, and we had to search for some time before we could discover a safe ford. The course of this river, which passes between Mount Nidjé and the end of the Babuna chain, has never yet been explored, and well deserves the attention of future travellers.

The position of Czerna Gratzko is precisely such as the Greeks were accustomed to choose for their towns—a lower height at the end of a range of mountains, separated by a depression from those behind, and projecting into a plain which it thus commands, while a river makes a bend under its walls. The site is now occupied by a walled Bulgarian village, the house of the chief man being placed at the angle which overlooks the river, and supported on high stone foundations. There can be little doubt that this place represents the important town of Stobi, which in Roman times was the meeting-point of four great roads ; one from the Danube by Scupi (Uskiub) ; another from Serdica, near the modern Sophia, to the north-east ; a third from Heracleia (Monastir), to the south-west, thus forming a line of connection with the Egnatian Way ; and a fourth to Thessalonica. It is mentioned in the

Tabular Itinerary⁴ as being 47 Roman miles from Heraclieia, and 55 from Tauriana (Doiran), which is 33 from Thessalonica : these distances, as far as we can at present judge, agree very fairly with this position ; and still more exact is the distance of 23 Roman miles from the Stena, or Iron Gate of the Axius, at which we arrived on the following day. Again, as it was on the road from Thessalonica to Scupi, we should expect it to be near the Axius ; and it is described by Livy as being a town of Pæonia, in the district Deuriopus, which was watered by the Erigon :⁵ the importance of this position also at the junction of two considerable rivers is in its favour, for the Czerna joins the Vardar less than a mile below. That it is an ancient site is shown by the piece of a column which had been brought from thence. I inquired for coins, but could not hear of any. After crossing the river, we ascended the height behind the village, which is the highest point of these hills, thinking that possibly the city might have stood there instead of being on the lower spur, but we found no traces of ruins ; and I have little doubt that Czerna Gratzko itself is on the site of Stobi.

The heights just mentioned belong to one of the numerous spurs which from time to time are thrown out towards the Vardar, in this part of our route, from the loftier chains, which run parallel to it at a distance of about 20 miles to the west, and from 10 to 15 to the east : the still higher range which at intervals appeared far away to the west was probably the Babuna. From Czerna Gratzko we rode over a succession of low hills to Negotin, or Tikvesh, which was to be our resting-place for the night—a poor country-town, though far superior

⁴ See Leake's 'Northern Greece,' iii. 441.

⁵ Livy, xxxiii. 19, xxxix. 53, xlvi. 29.

to all the other places between Kiuprili and Salonica : it is divided into a Turkish and a Christian quarter, the former of which is distinguished by its mosque, the latter by its clock-tower. This place is situated at some distance from the river, which here makes a considerable bend to the east ; we were much puzzled in finding it, as the two names are marked in Kiepert as representing two separate places. To us, both in the town itself and in the neighbouring village of Islam-Koi, the natives declared that they were two names for the same place ; at a khan near Marvinsta, however, a day's journey further south, the khanji said that Tikvesh is the name of the district, Negotin of the town ; and the same account is given by Dr. Barth,⁶ whose route through Turkey, in 1862, here cuts across ours. These conflicting statements can only be reconciled by supposing that while the town is called Negotin, of which there is no doubt, the name of Tikvesh is applied both to it and to the district. Certain it is that double names are frequently found in these parts, both for places and features of the country ; and though in many cases this arises from the mixed Turkish and Bulgarian population, yet apparently it does not always proceed from this cause.

At half-past five the next morning we were on our way, still keeping on the low hills, from which we occasionally obtained peeps of the river, until we gradually descended to it near the miserable village of Banja, which lies about a mile-and-a-half above the Iron Gate. As the city of Antigoneia, according to the Tabular Itinerary, was situated about half-way between Stobi and the Stena, its remains, if any exist, ought to be found somewhere in this part of the country ; however, notwith-

⁶ ‘Reise durch das Innere der Europäischen Türkei,’ p. 120.

standing many inquiries, we could hear nothing of antiquities, either at Negotin or Banja, or anywhere else along our route, nor did we see any squared stones or pieces of marble in the villages. Shortly before reaching Banja there is a hill suitable for the site of a city, in a position somewhat resembling that of Czerna Gratzko, and commanding the entrance to the defile : this, however, is too far south for what is required, and at Banja we were informed that there were no old walls on its summit. Throughout this part of the country the soil is composed of a sandy clay, which is very friable and powdery, and consequently ill-suited for preserving the traces of ancient cities. Below Banja, and just above the defile, is a wide river-bed, in which a narrow stream of clear water was flowing ; all about its bed dwarf plane-trees were growing, and this was the first place where we had seen any number of them ; below the defile they appear at once to have entered on a different temperature, for there they form the principal vegetation, and grow most luxuriantly.

The Demirkapu, or Iron Gate of the Vardar, resembles in its main features the more famous defile of the same name on the Danube, being a passage between steep walls of rock, through which the river forces its way in a series of rapids. The first of these commences just above the pass, and makes a sharp turn on entering it ; then succeeds a long reach of calm water, until another rapid is formed towards its exit. On the two sides, lofty cliffs of grey limestone patched with red rise almost precipitously over the river, bearing feathery trees and shrubs in their crevices. The path lies on the right bank ; just at its entrance, at the angle formed by the first rapid, a Turkish guard-house is built over an archway through which the road passes, and shortly after this, where a

large rock on your left hand lies detached from the precipices, a passage has been cut through, traces of the work being left in the ribbed lines and grooving with which its sides are marked. This is probably Roman work, and we saw exactly similar marks on the rocks in the pass of Tempe; but it may date from a still earlier period, for this pass must always have been of importance for the traffic of the country, and we know from Thucydides that regular lines of communication existed in this district at least as early as the Peloponnesian war.⁷ In parts the road is supported on masonry, room being just left for it between the cliffs and the river, over which it hangs. The height of the precipices may be 600 or 700 feet on the left bank, and somewhat less on the right; they are steepest in the middle of the defile, where on the opposite side to the road they descend immediately to the water; just below this, again, they are intersected by a deep cleft, and at the lower end of the gorge a lofty peak towers finely above the river. The pass is about a quarter of a mile long, and after you have passed the guard-house makes a curve, first to the left and then again to the right: the river is perhaps 500 feet in width; while we were there a fine eagle soared across and settled on the rocks on the further side. It was an exciting sight to see the boats which navigate this part of the stream shooting the rapids. We had noticed some of them at Kiuprili, from which place they start to carry corn to Salonica for exportation, and were anxious to know how they could make the return journey, for they are not arranged for rowing, and simply float down the rapid currents. We were informed that they never come back, but on reaching the sea are broken up and sold for

⁷ Thuc., ii. 100.

timber, while their freight is carried in boats to the city. They resemble huge punts, being simple parallelograms of boards constructed in the rudest way, two of which are fastened together side by side ; and when they come to the rapids, a man is stationed at either end of both boats, four in all, and as they are borne down through the surging current, they all steer with paddles, which are something between a rudder and an oar, and direct their unwieldy vessel very cleverly.⁸

Perhaps the finest view of the defile is obtained from near its exit, where the path ascends over a rocky spur. Here, as you look back, nothing is seen but the course of the river, and the grand abrupt precipices which close it in. Below this point the valley becomes more open, but the succeeding fifteen miles of its descent are bounded on either side by high hills ; the road follows the stream, and is shaded in places by well-grown plane-trees. Above Banja we had met very little traffic, but here we were passed by numbers of mules, horses, and asses, laden with a variety of boxes and bales, and, as we advanced further towards Salonica, the road at intervals was lined with caravans of merchants and carriers. We found that they were on their way to the great fair at Perlepe, which was to take place in a fortnight's time ; they turn off from the main road near Banja by a track that leads westward from that point through the mountains. At the time of Dr. Barth's visit in 1862, this part of the route seems to have been almost deserted ; perhaps on account of the robbers whom he frequently mentions as then infesting the country. About ten miles below the Iron Gate we crossed the river by a ferry, a short distance from which is situated the Gradet Khan, where we

⁸ The barometer gave 280 feet as the height of the Demirkapu above the sea.

made our midday halt. Delightful it was to rest under the shadow of a spreading mulberry-tree in the midst of the tall maize, listening half-asleep to the song of the cicala—for both we and our horses began to feel the heat ; the latter especially had a right to show signs of fatigue towards the end of their long journey from Scodra, and we were obliged to ride them more slowly than heretofore. The khanji at this place, like several others whom we met with on this road, came from Zitza, near Yanina ; a district of Albania, many of the inhabitants of which seem to take to this occupation.

Our course on leaving the khan continued along the river, until a considerable plain opened out to the east, through which we made a détour to avoid a bend of the stream. On the opposite side of this the hills again descend to the water, while another plain opens out from the opposite bank, and extends for some distance down the Vardar. As we pass through these hills, we leave on our left the village of Marvinsta, and descend to a place called Gradiska, which lies among them, composed of wretched Bulgarian hovels, containing a very stupid and boorish, but not uncivil, population. Nothing can be more striking than the entire absence of towns along this great artery of internal communication, flowing, as it does, through a district capable of good cultivation, and well provided with springs of water ; it can only be regarded as proceeding from complete neglect of the true means of developing the resources of the country. The river itself, which is visible from this place, is a fine sight when it flows in one stream, but in this part it is broken up by sand-banks, and consequently shallow : the work of making it navigable would now be a difficult one. On the enclosures built round the houses in the village were

suspended numerous bleached skulls of horses or oxen, as is frequently the case on hedges in Turkey: the Greeks use these as scarecrows, but the Bulgarians are said to regard them as signs of wealth, and of good omen. By both these races it is probable that the power of averting evil is attributed to them, as was the case also among the ancient Greeks.⁹ The khanji with whom we passed the night informed me that there were remains of ancient walls on a height near Marvinsta, and that coins were found there, but the peasants had no use for them, and threw them away. This site may, perhaps, represent Idomene, a place situated on the great northern road between Tauriana and the Stena, which would naturally pass by here. Colonel Leake, who did not visit this part of the country, suggests that that place should be looked for on the other side of the river, because it is spoken of as being in the province of Emathia, which was bounded to the eastward by the Axius;¹⁰ on the other hand, the statement of Thucydides¹¹ that Sitalces, King of Thrace, when invading Macedonia from the east, descended upon the Axius at Idomene, might seem to imply that it was situated on the left bank. It is true that that place is said to be only twelve Roman miles below the Stena, and this site is considerably further, but the numbers of the Itinerary are not very trustworthy, and in a land where important towns seem to have been scarce, the discovery of a city well situated on the road, not very far from the required position, is a presumption in its favour. Below Gradiska the rocks have evidently been cut to make a passage for the road, which may, perhaps, follow the ancient track. From this

⁹ See Wachsmuth, 'Das alte Griechenland im neuen,' p. 62.

¹⁰ 'Northern Greece,' iii. p. 442.

¹¹ Thuc., ii. 95.

point the mountains on both sides of the valley retire from the river, especially those to the east, which trend away to a good distance; upon those on the opposite side somewhat further down is a village which contains a manufactory of cloth for the Turkish army. Westward of these mountains again, and north of Vodena, is the district called Moglena, which is inhabited by the Pomaks, a colony of many thousand Bulgarians, who have turned Mahometans.

After continuing our journey the next morning for some little way along the bank of the river, we at last take leave of it for good, and, crossing another plain, strike into a bare sandy table-land, on reaching the ridge at the further end of which the scenery entirely changes from what we have lately seen. Before us lay an alluvial plain, at the lower—*i. e.*, the western—end of which, bounded by green marshes, was spread a broad expanse of water, at least twelve miles long, at first enclosed between the line of hills on which we were standing and an opposite ridge of the same elevation, but afterwards extending into the level country in the direction of the Vardar. From the bare heights opposite there rose, at a point directly to the south-east, a rocky hill with a castellated appearance, on which, we were told, on Easter morning a great number of Christians assemble for service. The summit itself, when seen near at hand, resembles a huge altar, but there is no church upon it. It is dedicated to St. Lazarus: the Turks call it Kalabak. Through the centre of the plain a narrow river flows into the Ardjen lake—as this piece of water is called—from the smaller lake of Doiran, on which, at a distance of three hours from the head of the Ardjen lake, stands the town of Doiran, the ancient Tauriana. Both the town and lake are hidden by intervening hills, and behind

this again, to the north-east, high mountains bound the horizon. This view impressed us all the more from being quite unexpected, as in Kiepert's map only a small lake is marked in the position of this fine expanse. In winter it extends still further into the plain at its head, but at the further extremity we could not trace any connection between it and the Vardar. At Salonica we were told that the water of the lake passes off by evaporation only, and there is no natural communication between their waters ; but that a gentleman, who possesses a farm in that part of the country, has lately cut a dike for purposes of drainage to carry some of its surplus water into the Vardar.

As we were lying that afternoon during the overpowering heat on the gallery of the Ardjen-khan, in the midst of motley groups of Turkish, Bulgarian, and Albanian carriers, I fancied I traced above the end of the lake the grand form of a very dim and distant mountain. At first I mistrusted my eyes, but when at last I had persuaded myself that it was no illusion, I knew that there was but one mountain which could present such an appearance in that or in any other direction. Turning to an old Turk who was smoking his pipe close to me, I inquired its name ; "Elymb-dagh," he replied, giving the Turkish form of Olympus. There was refreshment in the very thought that, within a few days, we should be ensconced in some cool retreat upon its umbrageous sides ! As we crossed the plain on leaving this place we passed the stream which runs from the Doiran lake, now a trickling rivulet, and mounted the heights on the other side just west of the altar-formed hill, whence we obtained views over the lower course of the Vardar, which lay wholly in the plain. At last, after traversing some more barren undulating ground, we descended in the evening

to Avret Hissar, a Turkish village lying under a steep height, surmounted by a mediæval castle with picturesque walls of defence following the lines of the cliffs. Beyond this place another extensive plateau of sandy moor-land intervenes before the plain of Salonica is reached. In the midst of this lies a lake about a mile and a half in length, without any visible escape for its waters, from the neighbourhood of which our eyes were at length delighted with the sight of the clear blue sea. We wound our way down to the village of Galliko, on a river of the same name—the ancient Echidorus—an inconsiderable stream, which might easily have been drunk up by the army of Xerxes, as Herodotus tells us it was.¹² Not far from this we found ourselves once more on the carriage-road which had been intended to go to Monastir—as dusty now as it had been muddy when last we passed it—and rode along this through the parched plain to Salonica. In the environs of the city we saw the cypress for the first time since leaving the Adriatic.¹³

Having thus followed the Vardar throughout the greater part of its course, it may not be amiss for me to say a few words about a project that has lately been

¹² Herod. vii. 127.

¹³ The following are the distances in hours and minutes between Uskiub and Salonica. The hour may be reckoned as from 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The general direction all through was rather S. of S.S.E. :—

	HRS.	MIN.		HRS.	MIN.
Uskiub			Gradet-khan —		20
Kaplan-khan 4	5		Gradiska 3		10
Kiuprili 4	40		Kumlu-koi 2		30
Gratschan 4	40		Ardjen-khan 2		15
Ford of Czerna .. —	35		Avret Hissar 2		45
Negotin 3	0		Lake 2		15
Banja 2	45		Khan Galliko 2		10
Demir Kapu —	20		Salonica 2		0
Ferry 2	10				

suggested,—of connecting the Danube with the Ægean by a line of railway. It was with the express object of discovering the practicability of this, with a view to making the line of communication between England and India pass through the Austrian dominions, that Von Hahn undertook his journey across Turkey in the winter of 1858, starting from Belgrade and following the stream of the Morava, which flows into the Danube at no great distance below that city, up to its head-waters, from whence he descended along the Vardar and its tributaries as far as Kiuprili. As long as the idea prevailed that a line of lofty mountains ran across Turkey from west to east between the head-waters of those rivers, such a project presented considerable difficulties ; these, however, have now disappeared, since he has shown from careful examination of the country, not only that no such barrier exists, but even that the tributaries of these two rivers rise together in an elevated plain at the inconsiderable height (according to his measurement) of 1328 (French) feet above the sea. The line thus traversed is nearly direct, and the country itself such as would repay opening up, as it is one of the most favoured districts in Europe. With regard to the further circumstances to be considered, the following remarks may be added in the writer's own words :—“A railway from Belgrade to Salónica, following the line which we have traversed, would not have to scale a single height, as it would run along the bed of rivers free from cataracts, and the only watershed which it would have to cross lies in a level depression. Consequently the only difficulties in the way of this railway consist in the river gorges that the line has to pass through, of which the Morava presents two, namely, those of Stalatsch and Masuritza, the Vardar

three. The total extent of all these gorges, so far as it was in our power approximately to estimate them, amounts to $17\frac{1}{2}$ hours, consequently one-ninth of the entire length of the line, which we computed at 156 hours. At the same time we consider ourselves justified in the supposition that a scientific investigation would result in showing that at least two of these gorges might be turned."

The difficulties in the way of such a project being thus proved to be inconsiderable, it remains to show the points in which this route to India would be superior to any other. In the first place, the Bay of Salonica is one of the finest harbours in the whole of the Mediterranean ; and, in addition to this, it is certainly nearer to Alexandria than any of the ports through which the traffic with Western Europe is carried on. Thus, while Trieste is distant 1200 miles, Genoa 1300 miles, and Marseilles 1380 miles from Alexandria, the distance from that place to Salonica is only 670 miles.¹⁴ And if, looking to the future, it be considered superfluous to take into account the routes by those places as lines to India, since the Italian route is certain ultimately to supersede them ; comparing this with our proposed line, it will be found that the sea-passage from Alexandria to Otranto is more than 100 miles the longer of the two, being 786 miles ; besides which there is always the possibility of the Salonica line being extended further south to Porto Rafti, at the extremity of Attica, from whence the distance is much shorter. The journey from Vienna to Salonica, supposing this railway to be made, is estimated at 600 miles : that from London to Vienna by Cologne is 1133,

¹⁴ Hahn, 'Reise von Belgrad nach Salonik,' p. 3.

but this number will be considerably reduced when the line of communication between those places is less circuitous. This makes a total of 1733 between London and Salonica. The distance from London to Otranto is about 1550 miles, and this gives the Italian line a certain advantage in respect of the land transit : but we must always take into consideration the superiority of land conveyance to that by sea, in respect both of speed and safety, and the consequent advantage of the line which has the shortest sea-passage. Again, in case of the Euphrates line of railway being opened, together with one from Belgrade to Constantinople, the latter would follow the same course with the one now proposed as far as Nitzch, which is one-third of the way to Salonica, while the rest of the Salonica line would be amply employed with the traffic from Smyrna and the Levant generally. In this way, though we may not share the expectation of the enthusiastic Austrian, that Vienna is destined, from its central position in Europe, to become the chief city of our hemisphere, yet there seems good reason for regarding his suggestion as feasible, and capable of being turned to good account.¹⁵

Let me now put together a few notes on one or two general points to which my attention was turned during this journey, and about some of which I obtained additional information from Mr. Wilkinson, the English consul at Salonica, a man unusually well-informed about the geography and ethnography of Turkey. One subject of considerable interest, about which I had made inquiries, is the migrations of large numbers of various races in search of employment. By these I mean not

¹⁵ See Hahn, ‘Reise von Belgrad nach Salonic,’ Introduction, and pp. 53, 54.

persons like the inhabitants of Zitza, who, as has been mentioned, leave their homes to establish themselves at a distance as innkeepers, in the same way as Scotch gardeners come to England ; nor yet the thoroughly nomad tribes, like the Black Wallachs, who change their quarters according to the season of the year and opportunities of finding pasturage ; nor even bodies of men, such as some among the Montenegrins, who go abroad for a period of years to earn a livelihood by employment on public works, or in any other way that presents itself : but such as, exercising a regular trade, annually migrate with a view of obtaining occupation, and return to their homes at a fixed season. We have already mentioned the inhabitants of the Dibra, the district about the valley of the Black Drin, as being the most famous carpenters and woodcutters in Turkey ; a great number of this tribe of Albanians emigrate for the greater part of the year, partly to cut wood in the mountains, and partly to exercise their trade as carpenters ; many of them pass by Salonica, and even travel as far as Asia Minor, but they always return home for the summer, where they arrive not later than the month of May. Similarly the Bulgarians, who are the foremost among the agricultural races, in the harvest season wander to distant parts of Turkey, where they are employed as reapers, as the Irish are in England. The Wallachians, also, who inhabit the western side of Mount Olympus, sometimes quite desert their villages, so that only women and children are to be found there ; they are mostly charcoal and lime burners. Again, Hahn describes the existence of bands of wandering masons among the Albanians, and compares them to their possible ancestors the Pelasgi, who were employed to

construct some of the great works at Athens, and to whose handiwork are to be referred most of the ancient massive walls of Greece and Italy.¹⁶ The employment of particular tribes in special crafts, and the amount of movement and communication throughout the country which these facts imply, afford us a curious insight into the social state of the interior of Turkey.

Another point of considerable interest was the effect on the country of the commercial treaty with England.¹⁷ That the system of free trade is hateful to the Turks is evident enough, for they frustrate it wherever they have an opportunity ; and this can be done consistently with much outward show of good-will towards it, for it is known that when the Turkish official receives his general order, he receives along with it his own private letter of instructions, the tenor of which is often very different, if not directly opposed to it. On the other hand there can be no doubt that English manufactures have found their way in enormous quantities into the markets of Turkey—with great advantage, of course, to the trade of this country—while in some parts of Turkey a marked development has taken place from the increased exports to England. The country in the neighbourhood of Seres, in the lower valley of the Strymon, to the north-east of Salonica, is a striking instance of this. Until lately the inhabitants of that district were excessively poor, but since the growth of cotton has been attempted there and found to succeed admirably, as it has also in the plain of Salonica, a season of great prosperity has set in, which has been checked, but not destroyed, by

¹⁶ Hahn, ‘Reise,’ p. 43.

¹⁷ The text of this will be found in Appendix IV. to Farley’s ‘Turkey,’ pp. 325, foll.

the discouragement arising from the sudden end of the American war. Under these circumstances it might seem that the treaty operated beneficially, by encouraging the people of Turkey in this and in other branches of trade to employ themselves in providing us with the raw material, while in return they receive from us the manufactured article. But I believe the very contrary of this to have been the case ; and I have generally found that English consuls, though naturally disposed to support the view that was most advantageous to England, are free to admit that it has seriously damaged the country by the blow it has inflicted on native industry. To take one instance : the Wallachs of Vlakho-Livadi, in the district west of Olympus, used to be great manufacturers of *skutia*, coarse woollen cloths of which capotes and cloaks are made ; but of late years, owing to the influx of English goods, their occupation has greatly declined. Now if this effect were confined to a few particular cases or limited branches of trade, it would not be worth considering, as being a period of change which the country must sooner or later pass through. But this is not so ; and whatever exaggeration may have been made by foreign writers when speaking of this subject, there can be no doubt that the ruin has been widely spread throughout the whole of Turkey. In a matter of this sort it should especially be remembered, that by destroying these branches of native industry we are most injuriously retarding the development of the people, independently of all questions of material prosperity : for in the early stages of a nation's progress towards civilization, the arts, however simple they may be, are amongst the most important instruments of its education ; and to divert it from these to the

production of raw material is to degrade it and check its natural growth.

One other subject which arrests the traveller's attention in passing through this part of Turkey, and is of great importance as bearing on the future destiny of the country, is the mutual relations of the Christian races within it, and their capacity for union and common action. Speculation on the future of Turkey must necessarily be vague, as the fairest theories may be overthrown by an aggressive war, or premature insurrection, or self-seeking policy on the part of European nations ; but it is not, therefore, useless to consider what combinations are possible, and what circumstances will be most favourable to a satisfactory settlement of the Eastern question. Now the Montenegrins and other Slavonic races profess themselves willing to accept permanently the suzerainty of the Porte, provided that they and the other nationalities should be allowed to be organized and to have freedom of action in accordance with their respective institutions. These conditions, or less than these, would satisfy the Bulgarians, whose aspirations are as yet too feeble for them to desire more than freedom from oppression ; at present they, or at least those of them who live near Salonica, from traditional associations still look to Russia as their protector, and know nothing of the Serbs, or of any Slavonic movement in Turkey by which their condition may be ameliorated. As to the Greeks, it would have been far better for Turkey if the frontier of the kingdom of Greece, instead of being drawn along a line south of Thessaly, had included that country and all the part of Albania within the same latitude, since by that means nearly all the Greeks and hellenized Albanians would

have been excluded from the dominions of the Sultan ; as it is, from their tendency to insurrection and continual aspirations after union with their independent brethren, they are a permanent source of weakness : but anyhow, in case of an organization of races under the Porte, they could never effectually oppose what was acquiesced in by the other Christians. What then is the obstacle in the way of the realization of some such scheme ? It is clear that the present state of things cannot last for ever : even supposing that the scandals of Turkish brutality and maladministration were to cease, yet, as it is certainly known that the Turkish race is rapidly decreasing, the numerical inequality between the dominant and subject races, which is now sufficiently striking, will ultimately become so flagrant as to call for interference. Why, then, cannot some compromise of this sort be effected ? The answer is, the Turks themselves are the obstacle. Except as a dominant race they never have existed, and never will exist, in the country. Their political system, based as it is on the Koran, prevents them ; and the whole spirit of the people, their pride, their intolerance, their fanatical hatred of change, is completely alien to such an idea. They may be forced into a condition of equality by governors from another race being set over them, but agree to it of their own accord they never will.

Putting aside then this solution of the difficulty, let us see what other combinations suggest themselves. And first, supposing the dominion of the Turks to come to an end, what prospect is there of its place being taken by an united Christian empire, containing within it the present Greek kingdom ?

It must be everybody's wish that a strong power

should be established in the south-east of Europe. Its strength would be the guarantee of its permanence, and its security against foreign aggression. But such a power can be formed only by the union and combined action of the two great Christian races in Turkey, the Greek and the Slavonic. The question then resolves itself into this—how far can these bodies sympathize and act together? Independently of politics, great advantages would result from their forming one nation. As M. Cyprien Robert is never tired of pointing out, the tendency of the Slavonians, but more especially of the Bulgarians, is naturally towards agriculture, while the Greek race is essentially commercial, and disposed towards business and city life; the one seems intended to be the complement of the other: “if these two rival tendencies,” he says, “could combine harmoniously and act independently, they would suffice to regenerate the East.”¹⁸ I long hoped and believed that this was possible, and even now I could almost conceive that it might be, if a great man were to arise for the work at the time of need, combining in himself extensive political views, unselfish aims, and a strong hand in administration—a man like Leopold of Belgium, though somewhat superior in every way. But such a contingency is too improbable to enter into our calculation, and without a *Deus ex machinâ* I do not think the problem can be solved. The Bulgarians, indeed, if left to themselves, might for a time submit to be governed by the Greeks; though destitute of all sympathy with them, and thoroughly opposed to them in character and feeling, they are profoundly impressed, the educated, as well as the uneducated, among them,

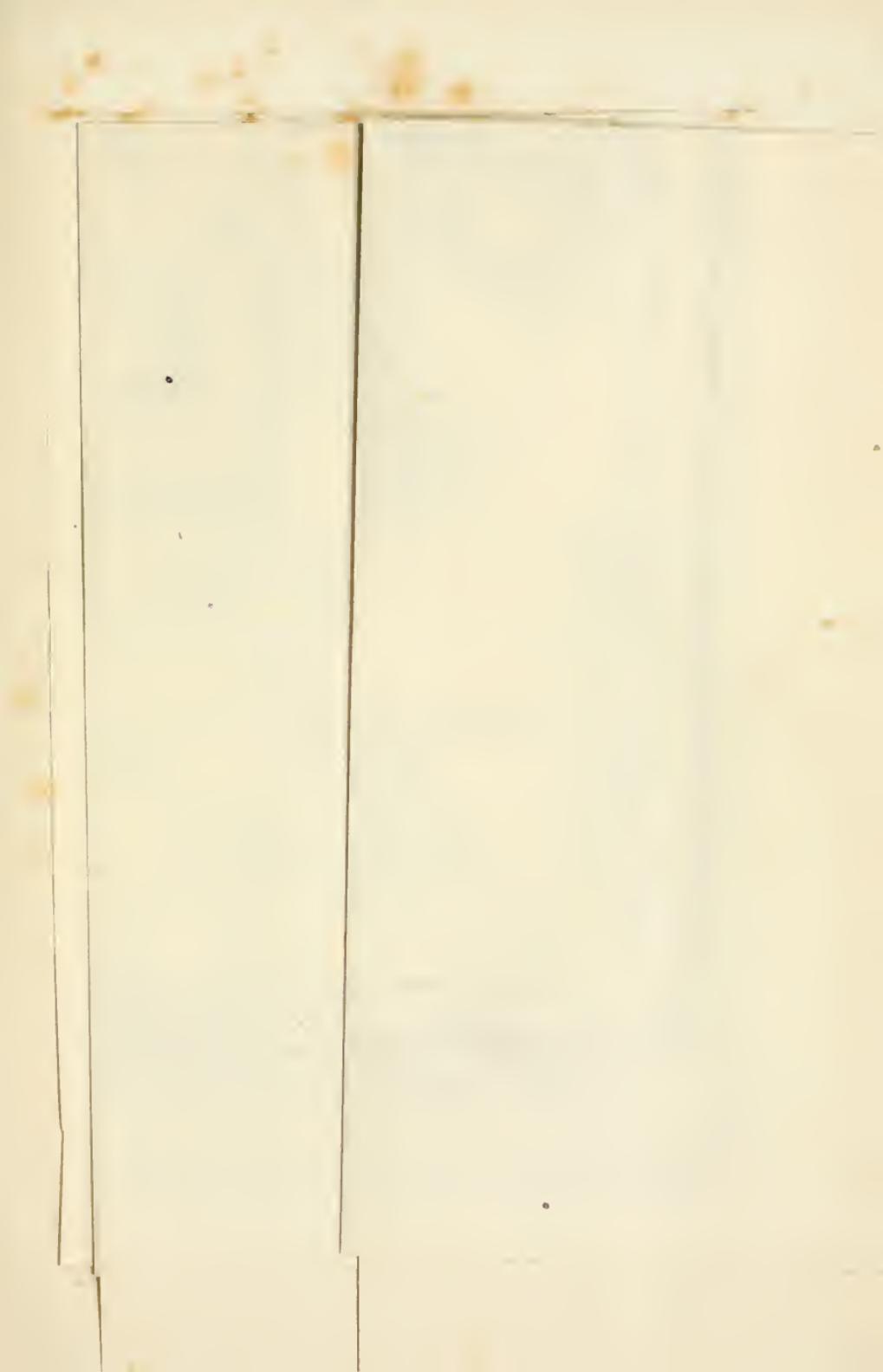
¹⁸ ‘Les Slaves de Turquie,’ ii. 230.

with their intellectual superiority ; but their recent movement in favour of ecclesiastical independence shows that they will not suffer themselves ultimately to be domineered over ; and, what is more important still, they are not the only element to be considered on their side of the question. Behind them lie the Serbs, the Bosniacs, the Montenegrins, and other Slavonic races, endued with an unyielding temperament and strong national feeling, in common with whom they are certain to act when the time comes ; and between these and the Greeks the contrast of character seems too great for community of action to be possible. The one are slow-moving, doggedly determined, fierce in action, and independent to the last degree ; the others quick, subtle, impulsive, over-reaching, and "too clever by half." When once a conflict of interests arose, or a struggle for influence, the difference between them would be irreconcilable. Now when we consider that the territorial line of demarcation between the two races, as well as the distinction of character, is very strongly marked—Greek communities being comparatively rare northward of Mount Olympus and its parallel, and unmixed Slavonic blood being uncommon south of that line—the most probable course which things will take in Turkey, if left to themselves, seems to be the division of the peninsula south of the Danube between these peoples, the northern and larger half becoming a Slavonic nation, while Thessaly and Epirus will be united to the kingdom of Greece. If this should happen, Constantinople would almost certainly be made a free port—as the Slaves have no desire to possess it—and it is too important a position to be left in the hands of any one people. The ports of this south Slavonic state would then be Belgrade on the

Danube, Salonica on the Ægean, and Ragusa or Anti-vari on the Adriatic. As the capital should enjoy a central situation, and for the sake of safety should be removed from the frontiers, historical associations as well as advantageous position would seem to point either to Sophia, the ancient Sardica, or to Nitzch, the former capital of Servia.

END OF VOL. I.





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